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AMONGST THE POMEGRANATES.

'SPAIN,' say the guide-books, 'should be visited in spring or autumn, or not at all.' Our summer holiday had been postponed from week to week, till at length the gales of chill October had begun to scatter aloft the crisp brown leaves of vanished summer, and the long threatened rain was dashed fiercely against the dripping panes. Not holiday weather, in very sooth; but the guide was very plain. 'Go,' it said, 'to Spain in the autumn.' Whence it came about that after braving the terrors of the dreaded Bay, from which we were glad to escape with bulwarks smashed to match-wood; with twisted stanchions; with canvas, furred though it was, cut to ribbons by the storm; and with an uncomfortable list to port,—whence it came about that we found ourselves in due course gliding past the white cliffs of sunny Portugal. Very pleasant it was, too, to watch the nimble porpoises racing past us and tossing head over tail through the foam-capped waves. And great the excitement when we nearly ran down the whale off sunny Trafalgar Bay, a great lazy fellow floating just on a level with the surface, and lopping up and down with the swell for all the world like a huge water-bed. Paying no regard to his steering, but with all his attention absorbed in the

important duty of sending up mimic water-spouts, this gentleman owed his escape from collision to sheer good luck.

On our seventh morning at sea—we were a day late, thanks to the weather—at daybreak, came a peremptory knock at the door. 'Captain says, sir, if you want to see the Rock you must come up immediately.' The Captain's word being law, though labouring under an inherited dislike to early rising, we straightway tumbled out of bed and went to the bridge. Right ahead lay the grand old Rock of Gibraltar, its base still shrouded in the morning dim, with here and there a twinkling light from the still sleeping town at its foot. On the left lay Tarifa and the rocky Spanish coast. On the right, opposite to Gibraltar, towered lofty Ceuta and the African headland. Slowly the sun crept above rocky Africa, tipping with gold first the lofty crags of Ceuta, then the summit of the Rock itself, till all was aglow in the pink sunrise. Wonderfully like a lion couchant is the Rock as seen from the western sea at sunrise, with massive head and chest looking grimly across the strip of sea to Ceuta opposite. Unfortunately our Captain had altogether another theory on this point. 'It was the tail,' said he, in tones of gentle correction,

'which was just opposite Ceuta. The head looked quite the other way, right into Spain.' But the Captain might say what he pleased, and we stuck to our own view as regards the relative positions of head and tail. And our toilet having been somewhat hurried, and the dewy deck striking somewhat coldly on bare feet; and the sun having now fairly lifted his fiery face over the top of lofty Ceuta and blazed across the bay on to the white walls of Tarifa; we hastened below to get ready for shore.

Gibraltar is a very pleasant place in which to spend a day, or perhaps two days, but hardly one in which to spend an idle month. A long and rather steep street runs up through the town, and when you have walked up that street you have practically seen Gibraltar. Of course the fortifications and the big guns are very interesting, but they, to my mind, hardly come up to the generally conceived ideas of the fortress. We had always pictured to ourselves fortifications right up to the top of the Rock, but as a fact they lie for the most part on a level with the town, or but little higher. There are one or two notable exceptions, particularly where battery on battery frowns over the Spanish mainland; but the fortifications seen from the sea are not so impressive as might be expected. To get a good idea of the immense strength of the place it is necessary to ascend to the top of the Rock, and thence look down on to the batteries, armed some of them with gigantic guns, and heaped up with toy-like mounds of shot and shell. Seen from above, the fortifications form quite a fringe to the town, and new works are being busily carried on. The view from the summit—or, rather, summits of the Rock, as it

has a peak at either end, and another half way between them—the view of Africa, the Mediterranean, Gibraltar Bay, and the Spanish mainland, with the Sierra Nevadas in the distance, is grand in the extreme. Far down beneath the signal station, where is a pretty little garden of English flowers, and where a bronzed artilleryman, wearing an English 'strawyard,' provides English beer for the parched climber up the steep path; far down, quite on the sandy beach, lies the little village of Catalan. It was Sunday afternoon when we saw it, and the villagers were dancing in the open air, in nowise deterred by the baking noon-day sun. Very quaint they looked through the glasses, going through a quadrille for all the world like marionettes. The music of their band could be heard very distinctly, but the distance was so great that the dancers appeared to be well into the second figure whilst the band still cheerily finished off the first. We were very fortunate in our ascent of the Rock. Whilst high up at the Spanish end, looking through an embrasure, we saw what at first appeared to be a dog, sitting gravely on his haunches at the end of a projecting rock, in full enjoyment of the view across the sandy lines. Presently, however, he thoughtfully rubbed his nose in a way that left no doubt as to his species; he was one of the celebrated Gibraltar apes, often quoted as evidence of the once united state of Gibraltar with opposite Ceuta. This was an unexpected sight to us, because the apes, when seen at all, are more often met with at the other end of the Rock, above Europa Point; and there we had looked for them with our fellow-passengers soon after landing. Whilst watching our friend through the glasses

some three or four of his companions stole round a corner, one of them having astride on its back a little baby-monkey, which presently skipped off to investigate a dwarf-palm, and having satisfied his curiosity, skipped on again in a style that showed him no stranger to the position.

It was getting dusk as we descended, and the flash of a big gun over at Algeciras was seen long before the heavy 'bang' followed it across the bay. Very curious it was to hear the sullen growl as the echo was thrown from rock to rock; and then to watch for the distant spark which heralded the next report. If one gun far away at Algeciras could produce such an effect, what must have been the ceaseless roar when, a hundred years ago, from the British batteries alone were discharged in one day 8000 rounds of cannon shot!

About nine o'clock at night a drum and fife band starts from the top of the town, and marches right down the long street, playing in a most sprightly and captivating way. The music dies away down by the landing-place, and after a time is heard approaching again, growing gradually louder till it turns off behind Commercial-square, when it is suddenly brought to a shrill conclusion. Then the many-uniformed soldiers are seen hastening off to their respective quarters, the shuffle of feet on the roughly-paved street becomes fainter, and soon after Gibraltar, or the more sober part of it, retires under its mosquito curtains, there to dream till the bang of the morning gun makes the walls tremble; and the cracking of whips and rattling of wheels in the busy street make sleep a thing of the past.

On ordering a bath, we were rather amused at our Spanish

homme-de-chambre, who evidently felt himself bound to make us understand, in spite of the manifest pain which the effort cost him, that the water was cold. Evidently the idea of a bath in cold water filled him with horror; but the bath was magnificent. It was right on the top of the flat marble-paved roof, commanding any number of similar roofs below, on which were growing flowers and plants, whilst the blue bay lay spread before the eye. On a roof some little distance off was a Gibraltine sportsman doing something with a gun, who, when he found himself observed, guiltily and in much haste sneaked, gun in hand, behind a convenient chimney, and there remained. We rather wondered what that gentleman was plotting, that discovery should so have disconcerted him!

From Gibraltar to Tangier is about four hours' run by steamer, the distance being some thirty miles. The passage is not always smooth, and the little steamers which run to and fro for fowls and fruit are very lively in a sea. The captain of our steamer was an Englishman—a very smart specimen of the British tar. He rather amused us with an account of a feud existing between him and the Spanish captain of the opposition. Our boat, which was of a deeper draught than the opposition, could be driven faster in a rough sea; whereas the opposition had the advantage in smooth weather. One day the opposition had on board her owner, and his captain was determined to show how he could play with the Englishman, the sea being then very calm. Accordingly, after running side by side with our friend for a short distance, he put on the steam, and crossed right before the bows of the English boat. This, of course, was highly ex-

asperating, but had to be submitted to. Presently the Spaniard dropped astern again, evidently preparing to repeat his successful exploit. By this time, however, both vessels had approached the coast; so much so, indeed, that our tar could see the bottom through the clear water. And so it happened that the Spaniard found himself forced either to cross immediately under the bows of the English tug—for such she really is—or else run straight on the rocks. He chose the former alternative, and in a very few minutes he found his vessel heeling well over on her side, with the bows of the tug grinding into her deck. ‘For,’ said our friend, ‘my blood was up, and I wasn’t a-going to stop, not if I sent the boat to the bottom, I wasn’t.’ However, at the sight of some ladies on board he relented; and, shortly after, the opposition, badly damaged, arrived at Tangier. ‘Then,’ quoth our tar, ‘he hauled me up before the Spanish Consul, looking mighty glum. “You’ll have to pay for this,” says the Consul. “Who are you?” says I. “I’m the Spanish Consul,” says he. “What have you got to say to me, then?” says I. “Thank God, I’m no Spaniard. I’m an Englishman. If you want me, you’ll find me at the British Consulate to-morrow morning at ten.” And then I just cleared out and left them. Next morning our Consul he says to me, “What’s the meaning of this, Captain! The Spanish Consul complains to me that you have insulted him.” “I never insulted him at all, sir,” said I. “I said, ‘Thank God I’m no Spaniard; I’m an Englishman;’ and that’s all I said.” Well, our Consul, as soon as he found it happened in British waters, he washed his hands of the whole job, and said it must be settled

at Gibraltar.’ Then our jolly sailor related, with virtuous indignation, how the Spaniard was forced to admit that he was not certificated, and that he knew nothing about the rule of the road, gravely maintaining, in fact, that if he wished to cross the bows of the tug it was the duty of the tug to stand by till he had completed his manœuvre,—not for him to pass under the tug’s stern.

‘How do you get on with the language?’ we asked.

‘Pretty well. I understand it better than I can speak it, though.’

On our expressing surprise, he proceeded to explain.

‘You see, sir, it’s very easy to understand a Spaniard, because his language is all signs. Tie a Spaniard’s hands and feet, and he can’t talk at all. O, but they’re a poor lot! Spaniards, Moors, Gibraltines, they’re all alike; they’re no good at all. Indeed they’re not, sir,’ he urged, very much in earnest, as we met this rather comprehensive utterance of opinion with a good-humoured smile. Whatever the fact may be, there could be no doubt that our yellow-bearded tar had a firm belief in his own diagnosis.

Tangier must be seen; no mere words can fitly describe it. Square-built houses in narrow rows like so many sections in a bar of whitening; streets so narrow that two men can hardly stumble abreast over the worse than uneven paving; tiny shops, in which stands a turbaned Moor built round with closely-packed and mysterious wares—if he wanted to stretch himself, he could not dream of doing so inside his shop. Then the smells! the awful, awful smells! Some arising from the cooking-shops, where a black-eyed Moor or Jew toasts tiny bits of oil-dripping flesh on rows of skewers. Others, no doubt, from

the fuel, which is the filth scraped from the streets flung against the walls to dry; or from the soap, uncomfortable-looking stuff in tubs, like molten toffee; or from the open tan-pits, where bare-legged Moors tramp ceaselessly on awashing skins, soaking in Morrocco dyes. And the unaccustomed noises! The babel of tongues rising from mat-screened rooms, where crowds of children, sitting cross-legged, shout aloud their lessons; the wrangling amongst the excited purchasers: 'It is nought, it is nought, saith the buyer,' the tinkling bell of the wild-looking water-seller, with wobbling skin of water hanging from his shoulder; the clatter of asses' feet, accompanied by many a resounding thwack of encouragement from the ready stick of the driver; and last, but not least, the extraordinary sounds of chanting proceeding from the stuffy little Jewish synagogue. Earlier in the day we had filled our guide with consternation at attempting to get a promiscuous glimpse at the inside of a mosque—'Maské,' he called it. We then asked him what would happen if we were to enter, and he had explained that we should 'have to fight the peoples.' So that, with this cheerful possibility in view, we were not over anxious to thrust ourselves unannounced and uninvited even into the little synagogue whence proceeded the weird sounds just referred to. But, having entered, we found the scene inside as curious as the noise heard from the outside. In the middle of the little building was a sort of raised stall, in which sat a couple of boys with their hats on, looking very discontented for want of something to do, apparently not permitted to leave their post. Two fat old men sat in different parts of the building, loudly

shouting out a kind of chant or dirge in which the word 'Adonai' and 'Alleluia' were repeated pretty frequently. From the roof hung an astonishing number of lamps of all kinds—hung, in fact, so close together as almost to touch; but it was too dark to inspect them, and we were not sorry to regain the comparative silence of the streets. Here and there over a doorway may be observed the impression of a hand in red paint. It seems that when a bride is taken to her new home custom or superstition has ready at the threshold a pot of paint, into which the lady is required to plunge her little hand, and then press it against or over the doorway. This is to keep off the 'Evil Eye,' which seems to be an ever-present source of dread. A flat piece of silver resembling a hand is commonly worn by women and children for the same purpose. Indeed, on a quaint necklace which we bought were, amongst other odds and ends, no fewer than five hands, differently shaped, in amber, silver, and stone. Some of the jewelry to be seen is exceedingly curious and interesting. The silver ware is currently admitted to be pure, and the purchaser buys it weight for weight against dollars, the seller charging so much more—the subject of arrangement—for his bargain.

The run back to Gibraltar takes about an hour less than the passage to Tangier, as there is a steady current of which advantage can be taken. The hour so saved just enabled us to catch the steamer running at intervals across the bay to Algeciras, crowded choke-full of country people who had been selling their goods at Gibraltar. Small though the steamer was, she could not approach the quay; and it was necessary here, as at all the Spanish ports which

we visited, to land in a boat. It seems that unless a bargain is made with the boatman at the outset the law enables him to make what charge he pleases, which charge custom has in many cases fixed at the inconveniently 'round' sum of 'one dollar and a peseta,' say five shillings. Boat-hire in Spain is a serious item in the expenditure of the coasting traveller, although at some places, such as Barcelona, the charge is reasonable enough. From Algeciras to Malaga the run by boat takes about twelve hours. We got on board at five o'clock, dinner then being nearly over. An hour later we endeavoured to explain to the steward, by means of the one talismanic word '*comida*,' meaning dinner, or anything to eat, that we wanted dinner; and were not a little disheartened at receiving the reply, accompanied by very expressive gesticulation, that dinner was '*consummada*.' Our knowledge of the language being already exhausted, things began to look very bad indeed; but after a long and anxious interval, to our equal surprise and gratification our friend the steward gave us to understand that the meal was awaiting us. The Spaniards are very fond of sweet chilis, or capscums, a large hollow vegetable-shaped like a long apple, some bright red, others equally bright green. They look very ornamental when exposed for sale, but to our idea, whether cooked or raw, are very unpalatable. The red kind is served up to look just like tomatoes, but the result is disappointing.

Malaga is not on the whole a town to very highly impress the visitor. Dark-green oranges and lemons lie piled in heaps by the roadsides ready for packing, and there is a large and interesting market crowded with rosy apples,

bright red pomegranates, and various kinds of grapes. The latter are very delicious—a large red kind, full of juice, with very thin skins. The bright greenish grapes sold in England come from Almeria,—pronounced Almería—and their exportation is due only to the peculiarly thick and tough skin which protects them. Spanish apples are generally of a cheerful ruddy complexion and inviting appearance, but to the taste woolliest of the woolly. The most curious feature in Malaga is the river-bed. Perfectly dry, it passes through the town with quay and roadway on either side, spanned by several iron bridges, whilst vehicles and pedestrians pass along the dry bed beneath, and hucksters expose their wares in the shade of the quay wall. It is difficult to realise that this wide deep road can be a river; but when the snow melts in the Sierra Nevadas a rushing torrent passes down to the sea, reaching at times up to the bridge floors.

A great place for sherry, too, is Malaga. We paid a visit to some large cellars, where our no doubt purely disinterested guide was very anxious that we should order a cask to be sent home. But one is never sure of getting the exact wine ordered, as mistakes will happen, and the expense attending the shipment of a single cask must be relatively considerable. Each cask has to be packed round with straw inside another cask, otherwise the thirsty tars and others manage to tap the contents. A friend domiciled in Spain tells me that he once had a cask of English ale sent to him doubly packed in this way, but when it reached him he found half the contents in the straw between the two casks. The thieves had bored through the first cask, and then, discovering the device, had bored

further on into the inner cask. Afterwards the inner cask slightly shifted, so that they could only plug the outer hole; consequently the beer leaked into the straw.

There is a very fine bull-ring in Malaga, and we took the opportunity to visit the interior, where our guide explained to us the various barbarous weapons designed for the tormenting of unfortunate bulls. But what impressed us more than anything else with a sense of the grim reality of the business was the so-called hospital, with its two little iron beds, and stretchers ready at hand for the conveyance of any luckless matador for whom the bull might prove too active. Close at hand, too, was a very homely chapel, in suggestive proximity to the hospital.

What most strikes the visitor on his first arrival in a Spanish town is the unfriendly look of the windows. All the windows on the ground-floor, and, indeed, often those reaching half up the houses, are fortified with heavy iron bars,—not as one sees them occasionally in England, springing straight from the window-sill and sunk again into the lintel, but projecting from below the sill at right angles to the wall for about four inches, then running straight up to the top and again turned in at a sharp angle over the window. Most inhospitable is the appearance presented by this prison-like array. Our guide explained that the object was to 'keep away the brigands,' by which, no doubt, he meant thieves in general. The side streets here, as in other places visited, were excessively narrow, so that they are always in the shade. The shoemakers and such-like workers take advantage of the shade to bring their work into the street in front of their gloomy shops, and there they sit and

gossip and scan the passer-by. Most of the men who are employed in outdoor work wear the typical brightly-coloured Spanish sash or girdle twisted tightly round the waist, the ends ingeniously tucked out of sight. We observed one of these men removing the sash to get at his money. The sash was made just in the same way as our grandfathers'—or, for the matter of that, our fathers'—silk-net purses,—a slit in the middle and a steel ring at either end to keep the money safe. But our friend's purse must have held—or at any rate had room for—a prodigious number of coins.

From Malaga to Granada is about nine hours by train, by way of Bobadillos. Only a single line of rails is in use, and the carriages and general arrangements are about as bad as they mostly are in England, but the pace is generally miserable. For some considerable distance the line is skirted by a grove of Australian gum-trees, or eucalypti, shooting up like fir-trees, and evidently thriving well in the hot dry climate. The country for some time after leaving Malaga is very desert-like and parched, the greater part of it being rocky and quite uncultivated. Where the peasants take the trouble to till and fertilise the soil, however, their outlay seems to be fully repaid. Their houses are mostly rather uncomfortable-looking buildings of rough stone, with no garden attached. A curious feature about them is the kitchen-fire and oven, built at some little distance from the house, and looking like large smoke-blackened beehives. Apparently all the cooking is carried on outside the house. Wherever a stream flows amongst the stony fields, there fruit and vegetables grow profusely, whilst the bright red fruit hangs from the little pomegranate bushes, and

almost touches the water. Probably no fruit presents a more glorious appearance than the ripe pomegranate hanging bright red amongst the leaves of the little tree, or rather shrub, on which it grows, sometimes in great numbers. The shrub itself is in appearance something between the box and the myrtle, and the fruit is frequently as large as the top of a quartern loaf, bright rosy red on one side and tawny brown on the other. Some of the fruit ripens into a dull brick colour. It grows so firmly on the stalk that it is by no means easy to gather it, and when quite ripe it splits into two or more pieces, and gradually turns inside out, the tough skin curling backwards to the stalk, and the juicy seeds falling to the ground. We were told that the whole fruit never detaches itself, and, unless gathered, always sheds its seed in this way. The little pip contained in each juicy sac is excessively bitter, as is the cartilage running through the fruit; but the peasants eat the pip, spite of the bitterness. Women offer the tempting fruit for sale at the railway-stations, where there is much demand for it amongst the dusty passengers. We bought two large ones for a halfpenny each, and very delicious they were, but left us frightfully sticky. The miserable green-gathered pomegranates one sees in England are little better than a parody on the ripe fruit to be had in its native land. The Spanish pronunciation is *pomégranaté*—the apple with pips. And pips it certainly has in abundance. As the train approaches the Sierra Nevadas, the gradient becomes steeper, and the pace diminishes in proportion. The line runs between walls of solid rock, and burrows through tunnel after tunnel, none of them fortunately of very great length.

Each tunnel is numbered, and there appear to be fifteen in all. A glance from the carriage-window shows immense rocks towering above, crag upon crag, each looking as if about to detach itself, and come crashing on the little creeping train. The Swiss mountains covered in ice and snow seem quite insignificant when remembered in comparison with these stupendous rocks. As the train rushes out of a tunnel, the traveller looks from the window and finds himself crossing a narrow gorge, with river-bed beneath; whilst high, high above rises a lofty peak, round which float majestic eagles, looking like little hawks against the blue sky. But all this has to be taken in at a glance, for in a moment the train has dashed rumbling across the little bridge, and is burrowing again into the smoke and dank of another rock-hewn tunnel.

But if the ascent of the Nevadas gradient is slow, very different is the descent. The road on this side is much steeper, and the train goes rattling down hill at a pace really terrific. Children and decrepit old women stand at short intervals along the line, extended bâton or flag in hand; but they afford no great sense of security to the justly apprehensive passenger. A good deal of Indian corn is grown all along this line, and every cottage has its perfectly flat and bare patch of ground on which the heads are spread to dry. Sometimes women and children may be seen sitting in the shade of an extemporised arbour, hard at work picking the husk from the ears, which are then tossed into the bright sun. These cheerful-looking red patches of drying-corn form a pleasant feature in the arid landscape. Amid the short stubble rides the Spanish sportsman, his gun slung at his right

hand, muzzle pointing to the ground. It would be interesting to know how a suddenly-rising bird is to be bagged on this system of gunning. One of the most curious wayside objects in southern Spain is the snail,—a little white-shelled fellow not so big as a periwinkle, who swarms up every stem to such an extent that the whole plant is literally completely covered from root to flower. So plentiful are these snails both on shrub and ground that in places the country-side is white with them. They all seem to be quite dead and dry, but stick nevertheless like limpets, and cannot be shaken off. It was so, too, over the Rock at Gibraltar. Even the large and sturdy prickly pear swarms with this little snail. Very picturesque is the prickly pear cactus, sometimes covered with pears on its top leaves or branches, call them which you please, as thickly as they can be packed together. Each pear is heavily armed with sharp and almost invisible spines, which penetrate the unwary hand, and cause much annoyance. The ready cure is to scrub the hand with a rough stone, so breaking the little spikes off quite close, or dragging them out altogether. The leaves, too, great fleshy masses, are armed with similar spikes, but an inch long, and proportionately sharp. These leaves are said to be a cure for rheumatism. The treatment is to split the leaf down the middle, make it hot at the fire, and then apply it to the affected part. A prickly-pear hedge must plainly be absolutely impenetrable.

Granada lies some little way from the station, and the Alhambra is about the same distance on the other side of the town. A long and steep road leads to the ancient citadel through a thick grove of tall elm-trees, which stand much

in need of thinning. The trees were planted here by the Duke of Wellington at the close of the Peninsula war, and the Spaniards regard them as great curiosities. The temperature on this lofty eminence, withinsight of thesnowy Nevada range, is comparatively low, and northern plants and shrubs thrive well. Down either side of the road up the hill flows a rapid running brook, babbling and rippling incessantly. At night, on waking, it is difficult to believe that there is not a heavy shower of rain falling, owing to the numerous rivulets and cascades which splash amongst the trees. No words can describe the loveliness of the view from the Alhambra. The palace stands on the edge of a lofty precipice, the spires and flat roofs of Granada spread out beneath, whilst fertile fruit-gardens and groves extend on all sides up to the distant mountains. And no words can describe the marvellous grace and beauty of the old Moorish palace, with its marble courts, its entrancing stalactite roofing and quaint horse-shoe arches. Over the principal entrance is carved a large hand, variously explained, in connection with a carved key on an inner arch, to mean all kinds of things. But to the visitor, fresh from Moorish Tangier, it can have only one signification—a safeguard against the Evil Eye. The wonderful arabesques and stalactites are all made of stucco, worked with a graver when soft, but now as hard as stone itself. The Government has workmen employed reproducing both the stucco and the carved woodwork for purposes of much needed repair, the work being carried on in a highly creditable manner. Far down the side of the steep rock, where a gutter from some workmen's kitchen empties itself, amongst luxuriant

periwinkle flowers we noticed some half-dozen of the very biggest rats that can be seen anywhere, with gigantic tails switching amongst the broken eggshells. Presently there came a sudden 'swosh' of water from a broken gargoyle far above, and the stampede was general and complete.

As all the world knows, the Koran prohibits any representation of things animate or inanimate; whence it arose that the faithful followers of the prophet were rather hard pressed to know how to decorate their mosques and buildings, sculpture and painting being alike tabooed. But as the sight of bare walls was insupportable, something had to be done, so the faithful set to work and covered them with those marvellously elaborated intricacies now known as 'arabesques,' after the designers. At first sight the lions forming the fountain in the celebrated Court of Lions seem to be in direct opposition to this part of the Koran. Closer inspection, however, shows that while the spirit has been disregarded, the letter nevertheless has not been broken; the faces of the so-called lions being made to resemble those of leopards, whilst the legs are quite as much like bedposts as anything else. Both in this matter, and in that of the objectionable part of pork, the Koran has failed to be sufficiently precise. The edict against representation is ignored altogether by Indian and Persian believers—witness the black eyebrowed and almond-eyed beauties whom the Persians never tire of painting. In the Architectural Court of the South Kensington Museum may be seen some beautiful imitations of the Alhambra arabesques and arches. In the Hall of the Abencerrages—pro-

nounced 'Abenkerraches'—is a white marble basin, in which a dull brown stain is said to be due to the blood of some fifty statesmen or courtiers, whose heads were here cut off, one after the other, by a certain Mr. Abonabdoulah, in days gone by. Our guide observed that some little time back, a discussion arising between two visitors as to the truth of the popular idea regarding the stain, one of them chipped off some of the brown stain and had it analysed down below at Granada. The result, to his view, went to prove the existence of blood; but the other, on the contrary, contended that the appearance of blood was, in fact, due to the presence of the chemical tests used to detect it; so that the experiment cannot be regarded as altogether satisfactory.

One of our most agreeable reminiscences of the Alhambra is of a fruit luncheon enjoyed in the garden of a cottage near the palace. Large bunches of ripe green grapes hung over head from a rustic trellis, whilst figs—the small yellow kind—and cheerful-faced pomegranates grew in abundance in the same little garden. Here also was an old-fashioned water tank, on the wall of which basked a pair of fat black cats, whilst a passionate-looking cock, undeterred by the fig-skins thrown at him, showed a fixed determination to share the meal. It has been my privilege at different times to enjoy the acquaintance both of a duck and an old speckled hen having a special weakness for mice, which they were always ready to gulp down whole, head first; but the passion that this cock possessed for grapes was something quite extraordinary. He would swallow one after the other like a pigeon pecking up peas, never bursting one, and on

the supply being checked would dash at his benefactors with comb aflame and mouth wide stretched in a way quite frightful to behold.

Since being at Granada we have quite lost our respect for ants—at any rate, for large black ants which string for thirty feet across the road in an unbroken and never-ending thread. They came out of a little hole between two flints, marched empty-handed across the dusty road in one long line, disappearing eventually down another hole like the first. We placed a small stone across the track and watched. For some three or four minutes the little black creatures kept heaping up before the stone till there was quite a crowd of them; but not one could find its way round to the other side on to the track. At length some few did get crowded on to the track, and then others slowly followed. So we lifted the stone, and there was quite a rush on to the deserted track. Again the pebble was placed before the now hurrying crowd, and the same crowding together, bewilderment, and confusion resulted. This manoeuvre we repeated several times, always before the van of the divided thread, but the ants got quicker each time at finding the road. Evidently, however, they were all terribly deficient in resource. The sight of the long black thread stretching across the wide road was very curious.

One of the inevitable drawbacks to travelling in Spain is the early rising to catch trains and diligences, which seem to run 'anyhow.' We had to get up at four in the morning in order to catch the diligence leaving Granada at five punctually for Menjíbar—pronounced here 'Menghivar'—and miserably uncomfortable we found it. Every country, almost

every locality, seems to strive to outvie the rest in the discomfort of its diligences; but to Granada must be accorded the palm. Ours was a miserable little rattletrap contrived to hold six wretched individuals inside, three opposite three, whilst in front was a seat called the *berlina*, hooded by a bath-chair arrangement in leather, to seat three more, the hood extending over the driver's seat as well. At five to the minute we rattled off through the darkness at a promising pace; but no sooner were we round the first corner than the vehicle pulled up whilst the inevitable coachman's companion sought portable and potable refreshment for the journey. We had managed to engage two seats in the *berlina*, into which we were wedged with a Spaniard like sardines, a leather apron, capped with a wooden beam, pressing on our legs. Just at my back—I was middle sardine—was a wooden shutter opening into the interior, which, on being suddenly opened from within for some weighty but unknown reason, allowed my back to bulge through, whilst the back of my head pressed with cruel sharpness against the top sill. After some minutes of agony our fellow traveller, seeing the predicament, kindly expostulated, and the shutter was closed; and at a lighter hour a little judicious application of surreptitious pen-knife precluded a repetition of such a disagreeable experience. Gradually the day broke, the outline of cactus trees became visible beside the dusty road, and solitary peasants were passed tramping off to work, each with his tin can, on which hung a loop of bread like a huge earring. As we neared the first relief the horses were lashed into a gallop—for the first and only time during a weary

twelve hours—and we finished at a terrific pace, the steeds laying hoof to ground in a way that made the diligence rock like a cradle, whilst many a plaintive groan proceeded from the sleepy passengers within.

Breton and Swiss roads are solitary enough, but the desolation of a south Spanish road is insupportable. Hardly a house to be seen, no hedges, not a church spire even in the far distance, and scarcely half a dozen peasants to be seen in as many hours. Complete desolation reigns everywhere. Generally speaking, too, when a continental diligence pulls up to change horses, there is a certain amount of chat and badinage between the coachman and the ostlers and idlers; but here in Spain no one seems to care to know how the coachman's wife is, or what he sold the pig for; whilst the coachman, for his part, is equally indifferent as to the prospect of the olive crop, or the current price of straw. All is solemn and silent as if the plague were abroad. One misses, too, those quaint and homely crucifixes and images of the Virgin so commonly seen by the continental roadside, but which are altogether wanting here. The only little bit of brightness we saw in ten weary hours was some half-dozen large dark-blue birds which rose from the tangle by the wayside. Very handsome they were, and like no birds that we had seen before. They resembled pigeons, but each flitted into the nearest bush after the skittish manner of blackbirds. Beside our coachman sat a workman, apparently, who appeared ill at ease. After some hours he undid his sash, and from beneath it drew a huge long bag of dollars, which he and the coachman forthwith proceeded with great solicitude to stow under the seat. The

bag must have been about twenty inches long, and four or five inches in diameter, and was exceedingly heavy. After this relief, our friend proceeded to enjoy a meal of dry bread and very strong-smelling red capsicums, eaten raw, with much relish. These were washed down with wine contained in a large leather bag like a bagpipe, the process of drinking being quite a study. First the mouth-piece of the bagpipe had to be grasped with the right hand and raised to the mouth; whilst the other end of the soft bottle was taken airily between the thumb and finger of the left hand and extended at full length, being gradually raised as the supply diminished. The coachman also partook, and the bottle was then very courteously offered to the occupants of the berlina. At intervals we passed a couple of Civil Guards, very smart, well set-up young fellows, armed with rifles, and wearing black cloth gaiters the facsimile of those used to grace the reverend calves of our own archdeacons. These police, as the diligence approach, stand one on either side of the road in the 'stand-at-ease' position, and so remain whilst the vehicle lumbers past. Outside one of the few houses we passed stood a gigantic stone jar in which the olive oil is collected. Some of these jars stand some ten feet high, and have to be got at by a ladder. The oil is ultimately tied up in pig- or goat-skins, in which the legs and neck are plainly visible. Very curious these bottles look lying in oily rows by the roadside. At Jaen the passenger from Granada has to change into a huge diligence with seats on the roof, drawn by four pairs of mules or horses, the former being frequently larger animals than the latter. A postilion sits on the near leader,

his feet in the clumsy iron boxes used by the Spaniard for stirrups. Beside the coachman sits an aide-de-camp, provided with numerous lumps of macadam, frequently replenished from the roadside. These stones he throws with wonderful precision at the poor steeds as occasion seems to require, or, rather, as the fancy takes him. But notwithstanding all these preparations, our progress was wretchedly slow. The country between Jaen and Menjibar is hideously bleak and uninteresting. The only speck of green on the road—about three hours—was an exceptionally large lizard, who, in spite of his size, showed great agility in retreating into his dusty dwelling at our lumbering approach.

Since four in the morning we had not stopped for ten minutes, and had had nothing to eat except some sawdusty bread that we had put into our pockets at starting, and some grapes which we had espied hanging from the ceiling in a cottage, so that we were thankful to get a hasty meal at Menjibar station. We were in a delicious state of uncertainty as to how many times we had to change *en route* for Valencia, or how long the train took; but eventually we did arrive at our destination after seventeen weary hours' journey. The scenery before arriving at Valencia is very charming. Fruit-trees are planted thickly beside the line, the dark-green of orange and lemon mixing with the jolly red of pomegranate; whilst tall date-palms, with clusters of yellow fruit hanging from their leafy summits, are scattered here and there. The grapes were all gathered, and the fields of parched vines closely resembled a potato-ground at the end of summer. The orange and lemon-trees—or, rather, shrubs—are planted

in uncompromising rows and cross-rows, chess-board fashion, and do not contribute much to the interest of the view. Rice, too, is cultivated here, and the marshy ground on which it is grown seemed quite a new feature in arid Spain.

With Valencia we were disappointed. The streets are mean and uninteresting, or so they appeared to us after our wearisome journey by road and rail from Granada; the wide river-bed was dry and dusty, and the town itself lies some three miles away from, and quite out of sight of, the sea. Consequently, finding that our old friend the Camara, which had meantime steamed round the coast from Malaga, was about to sail for Barcelona, we lost no time in getting on board. The run to Barcelona took about sixteen hours, and it was Sunday morning when anchor was dropped in the harbour, which, crowded with ships of all sizes and flags, presented an attractive appearance from the sea.

The great feature in Barcelona is the Rambla, a rather wide street about a mile in length, running through the city. Down the middle of this street runs the promenade, shaded by an avenue of well-grown plane-trees; whilst on either side is a single line of tramway, bordered again by pavement. All day long a constant stream of pedestrians passes up and down, and on Sunday afternoon the Rambla seems to be the favourite resort of all the loungers in Barcelona. Amongst the latter may be seen Spanish ladies, old and young—or, which is the same thing in Spain, fat and thin—with light mantilla hanging gracefully over the shoulders, whilst a coquettishly held fan is spread to shield the bare head from the sun. And here let me observe that the sanguine ex-

pectations in which we had permitted ourselves to indulge respecting the fabled beauty of Spanish ladies were doomed to disappointment, utter and complete. Far be it from me to say that the old race of Spanish beauties has died out! All I say is, that we did not see any of them, if we except, that is, one very charming little lady who shed light on our path at Granada. She was our only gem. The lottery appears to be greatly in vogue in Spain. Everywhere one encounters kiosques on which are placards of successful numbers, whilst others invite the charitable to take tickets for the benefit of hospitals and suchlike institutions under Government auspices. All things considered, Barcelona is one of the brightest and best-arranged cities to be met with anywhere—full of life and activity, and as *bon marché* as Paris, from which the arrangement of its streets and squares is largely borrowed. Probably there is no finer *café* in Europe than the *Café Colon*—Colonial—which is appointed in a really magnificent style, whilst the prices are relatively absurdly low.

The Camara was detained for three days at Barcelona, and during this time we had an opportunity to witness a bull-fight. The whole city was placarded with pictures and notices of the fight, the last of the season, in which bulls of four years old were to be engaged. In deference, less to the bulk of the bulls than to their comparative youth and inexperience, no horses were to be engaged; consequently we were able to escape the brutal and disgusting sights inevitable on other occasions. The placards spoke mainly of two prices, 'Sombra' so much, and 'Sol' so much, respectively six reals—real being two-

pence-halfpenny—and four reals, if my memory serves me. The bull-ring being open to the heat and dazzle of the sun, the 'Sombra' or shady side had a higher value attaching. And, indeed, it was pretty evident, from the comparatively crowded state of the 'Sol' side, that the additional two reals were a consideration with most of the mob, which was very largely represented disporting itself in blue blouse. Very few women were present, and they only of the lower classes. A Spanish gentleman, seated beside us, who spoke excellent English, observed that no ladies ever witnessed a bull-fight, 'although,' he added, with an expressive smile, 'it is quite the proper thing for English ladies to look on at pigeon-shooting; and pigeons can suffer just as much as bulls or horses.' Certainly there were no ladies to be seen on this occasion. A crowded bull-ring seen for the first time is a very interesting sight. Imagine, say, the Albert Hall, open to the sky, with tier upon tier of seats rising from the arena right to the top, whilst numerous red and white flags flutter from poles running round the breezy summit. The arena is, of course, grounded with sand, and is bordered by a wooden fencing rather over five feet high. Between this fence and the first tier of benches is a vacant space, some six feet in width, running all round the arena. In this space are stationed the Civil Guard, and the toreros, when closely pursued by the bull, vault nimbly over the first fence into this security ready at hand.

As the time drew near a horseman, the 'alguacil,' mounted on a superb black steed, entered the arena, gorgeously attired and wearing a wide-brimmed black hat. At his appearance the mob, who

had begun to grow impatient and somewhat obstreperous, subsided into cheerful expectation, and forgot to study the just distributed pink bills advertising some local tobacco. These had been cast in a gaily fluttering shower from amongst the flags up aloft, giving rise to huge scrambling and scuffling amongst the blue-bloused occupants of the brick seats on the Sol side. The cavalier pranced across the arena to the state-box occupied by some civic dignitary, and, hat in hand, halted his steed. The dignitary advanced to the front, where he afforded a magnificent view of white waistcoat, and, taking careful aim, tossed down a large key to the cavalier. The aim was good, but the key just missed the broad-brimmed hat held out to receive it, and had to be picked from the sand and handed to the alguacil, whilst he returned the hat to his head with a respectful flourish to the white waistcoat. This done he pranced to the bull-gate, handed the key to an attendant, and lost not a moment in retiring from the scene in safety. Meantime the doors of the bull's house were thrown open; the attendant slipped nimbly behind them; impatient sitters in the Sol leant over and thumped excitedly with their fists on the open doors; and out, straight as an arrow, with eyes aflame and lowered head, rushed the furious bull. A torero—toro, a bull—having a long cloak in his hand, red on one side, blue on the other, stood calmly awaiting the animal's charge. Just at the moment the bull slightly paused to toss him, stepping quietly aside, he threw out the long cloak, and the bull, to its manifest astonishment, found that his horns, instead of meeting with the resistance of a harlequin-like torero's body, were simply entangled in a flimsy cloak.

This was so unexpected that it was a moment before he could recover from the surprise; but in that moment the light-footed torero was running fleetly for the fence, and was well on his way before the bull caught sight of him. Instantly the furious beast rushed in pursuit, almost overtook him, lowered his head for the toss, when the man lightly grasped the top of the fence, vaulted over, and was lost. This was too exasperating, and more than the best-tempered bull in existence could possibly stand. But one blue-jacketed and bespangled torero is as good as another; there was balm in Gilead yet. At a little distance stood another torero obtrusively flaunting his aggravating cloak; the bull would go for him. Go for him he did, too, with a terrific rush, but only to become again mixed up in that ridiculous flimsy rag just when he thought he had his sturdy left horn well under the blue sash. Then followed, as before, the astonishment and the frantic dash. This time the man was flying over the fence at the same instant as the bull's horn ground against the wood beneath him, and a shout of applause of 'bravo toro' rent the air. The way these men vault the barrier is really delightful to see. It is not so much that the leap is a high one for a practised vaulter, and, in fact, a projecting fillet of wood runs along the fence about eighteen inches from the ground, and the leap is really made from this ledge; but it is the consummate grace and certainty of the leap, taken with easy confidence just at the moment when a slip or false step would mean death or cruel injury. The grace and skill of this manœuvre were, to our idea, the best part of the whole performance.

After this kind of thing had

proceeded for some five or ten minutes a middle-aged man, looking like a mechanic of some kind, climbed over the fence into the arena, having a ten-foot leaping-pole in his hand. He was an 'amateur' anxious to exhibit his skill. The bull was to rush at him, and he, instead of displaying a nimble pair of heels, was to take a flying leap over the animal's back just at the critical moment. But the bull disdained to bestow the smallest notice on him or his pole; and a very ridiculous figure he cut, making little preliminary half-frightened prances on the pole every time the bull turned an inflamed eye in his direction. Eventually he ignominiously retired, pole and all. But the bull, dispirited by frequent failure, had grown sluggish. He must have fresh life put into his panting shoulders. Accordingly, two rods, about thirty inches long, known as 'banderillas,' having brightly coloured ribbons and osettes twined round them, and armed at the point with a villainous-looking single sharp barb, were handed to a torero known as the 'banderillero.' All now held their breath, and keenly watched the stealthy torero. He, alive to the attention centred on him, and the peril of his enterprise, took a 'banderilla' in either hand, holding it at the extreme end, and with the two made defiant passes at the bull. The latter, watching sullenly some thirty yards across the sand, stood motionless. All at once he lowered his head and dashed furiously at the foe. The latter, without moving so much as a muscle, stood until the bull, almost on to him, half paused and bent his sturdy neck for the toss. This was the torero's opportunity. Stepping swift as lightning just one pace aside, he thrust the keen barbs into the tawny

shoulders, one on each side. There was a wild snort, a frantic bound from the poor beast, and then followed a succession of leaps about the arena, under the unexpected smart of the wounds. The banderillas, however, were not to be shaken out; but hung in their cruel gaudiness one from either side. The bull, goaded to madness, dashed at tormentor after tormentor; but with no better success than before. Always the baffling flimsy cloak, the fleet run of the pursued to the fence, and the agile bound into safety. Barb after barb was thrust into the poor gory shoulder till quite a festoon of streaming ribbons hung on either side.

After some five minutes of this edifying spectacle the gallant bull, tormented and baffled on all sides, refused to respond to fresh insults. Accordingly a long bright rapier was handed over the fence to an expectant torero, appropriately known as the 'matador,' or murderer, who once more had a dangerous task to fulfil. Waiting ominously whilst the bull regained his breath, the man proceeded to aggravate the animal from a little distance by flaunting the maddening cloak before his eyes. This time, however, there was death in the pot; the gaudy rag concealed a keen blade beneath its treacherous folds. At length came the furious rush, a sharp step aside, a flash of bright steel—but no; the opportunity was unfavourable, and the blade was replaced. Again, and yet again, this manœuvre was repeated, till finally the wished-for occasion presented itself, and instantly, with a cruel 'chick,' the sharp blade was thrust by nervous arm into the massive shoulder, only the dull hilt showing beside the spinal column. We of course expected to see the animal drop dead at once; but not at all. He did

but dash with renewed fury across the arena in hot pursuit of his tormentor; and his immense strength and endurance seemed to be affected but little, if at all. A few minutes elapsed and a fresh blade was handed to the matador. Then followed, as before, the treacherous waving of the cloak; and all was expectancy, when there arose a simultaneous shout of warning alike from Sol and Sombra. The man's long sash had become loose and one end dangled on the ground. With a hasty bow of acknowledgment the errant sash was gathered in; and at the same moment came the rush of the furious and despairing bull. A bright flash, a cruel sickening 'chick,' and the gallant beast stumbled and sank on his knee, whilst a triumphant shout rent the air. Then the matador, approaching, drew from his sash a short dagger, drove it between the vertebrae, and the poor bull instantly fell on his side, dead as a log. The band struck up gaily, the distant doors flew open, and four shapely mules, harnessed to a stout beam, and brightly decked with ribbons, were trotted to the carcass. A noose was hitched round the mighty horns, crack went the whip, the cavalcade swept round the arena at a gallop, and finally disappeared through the open doors, which were at once slammed together. And Sol and Sombra settled themselves to await the advent of a fresh bull. But we had seen enough—too much. Springing down into the intermediate space, where two men were washing gory swords, a bucket of water beside them, we turned our backs on the cruel scene, and with a sigh of relief found ourselves once more in the open air. No doubt the special points of admiration in a contest of this kind are largely missed

by the spectator beholding it for the first time, just as a Spaniard would fail to see and understand the beauties of our cricket or football, seeing the games for the first time. But a bullfight is, and must be to an Englishman, a cruel and debasing spectacle. It is opposed to all his ideas of fair play. Be the animal never so brave, never so strong and successful, he has no chance from the beginning. Sooner or later he has to fall before the blade of the matador. Doubtless a Spaniard would have considered our ideas of humanity altogether bad and perverted; and perhaps they were. But be this as it may, I am bound to admit that the spectacle would have been vastly more satisfactory to us if one of those blue-jacketed and bespangled matadors could have had his nimble flight over the palisade accelerated by an inch or so of often disappointed horn applied from the rear!

Before leaving behind us pleasant Barcelona—our last Spanish port—let me say one word on the subject of beggars. The beggars in Spain are at once a national institution and an intolerable nuisance. At the railway-stations they assemble under the carriage windows, and there whine dolefully and unchecked. In the streets, armless, legless, thumbless, they alternately grovel and flourish before the appalled pedestrian. In the markets they waylay him. Coming out of shop they trip him up. Always beg, beg, beg. Even Switzerland, the beggar's home, bids fair to be soon outdone. Passing through the market, the highly-flavoured market, at Barcelona, a respectable-looking woman, basket on arm, was bartering with a seller of high-smelling uncatables in the conger-eel line. As we passed she espied us, and, to our astonish-

ment, instantly became a whining suppliant for 'caridad.' On receiving no notice, this worthy dame presently resumed her bargaining with unimpaired vigour. Thus it is in Spain.

From Barcelona to Marseilles the run is very delightful. The Camara, which occupied about a day and a half on the trip, called at two pretty little villages on the coast to land bales of cork, piled sky-high on roomy lighters; so that a good view was obtained of the coast. White marble cliffs tower over the blue sea, with now and again a tiny village on the yellow sand, where a cleft occurs in the otherwise unbroken chain. Behind rise gently sloping hills, on which stand here a quaint and solemn watch-tower, there a clump of dark-green cork- or olive-trees. Anon a like lofty cliff shows out in the western distance; and as the steamer cleaves her path through the clear blue water, the two marble walls begin to converge: white-sailed fishing-boats fleck the sea, solitary lighthouses and forts stand out from whitely dashing waves, a forest of masts is discerned behind a massive

breakwater, and Marseilles, with lofty buildings glaring white in the sun; Marseilles, with busy quays, and wheels rattling and rumbling over dusty stones, piles itself street above street far back over the sloping ground. Dustiest of the dusty, hottest of the hot in summer months, no doubt. Dusty enough and hot enough indeed on this late October morning; but there are worse things than dust and heat. Or so, at any rate, we thought when, after sixteen hours of dash and rattle in express train, we found ourselves in wintry Paris. All Paris shivered in great-coats, huddled itself under umbrellas, and hurriedly splashed from arcade to arcade in vain endeavour to shelter itself from the pitiless driving sleet and wind. Welcome indeed would have been a little of the dust and cheery glow of bright Marseilles! But, fortunately for us, or the reverse, sunshine, like leisure, is not always to be had for the asking; and the fact should, at any rate, qualify us to properly appreciate the substantial comforts of a cheery English fireside. To obtain them no travelling is necessary.

DOUGLAS OWEN.

THE SANZIER SCANDAL.

I.

THE signal that the English mail is in sight has been flying since daybreak from the flagstaff by the little station on the cliff. Long before the lazy town of Hootsville is well awake from its crapulous slumbers, the red hull, white funnels, and tall tapering masts of the long-expected steamer might have been seen from the shore, as she grew out of the horizon and came up, panting and throbbing, through the rays of the rising sun. Within a hundred yards of the harbour, her engines ease off, and she lies rolling on the heavy ground-swell of the Bay of Susquannah. And now a puff of smoke from her little gun, followed by a little report which goosechoing and reëchoing through the gullies of the heights above the town, till it is caught up and silenced in the dreary moaning of the fog-horn, announces to the capital of the rising colony of Susquannah the arrival of the royal mail steamship Sentry.

Soon a string of dusky cabmen, cursing and flogging their wretched cattle, come racing down the long road to the docks. Coolies and loafers—whose name is legion—drag themselves, blinking and yawning, from the friendly shade of the warehouses, and swell the motley mob making for the pier-head. Mr. Port Officer Leaming, in all the pomp and circumstance of a gig and coloured crew, puts off to board the new-comer and satisfy himself as to her state of health during the voyage. And when this delicate matter

has been settled, the screw of the Sentry revolves once more, and, amid the feeble cheering of the emigrants on the forecastle, she sweeps slowly into dock.

Standing apart from the other passengers was a young lady, dressed in deep mourning, whose graceful figure and very beautiful face were apparently familiar to many of the shore-people, who now came swarming on board as soon as the ship was moored at the side of the quay. But the majority of those who recognised her either passed on with a rude, surprised stare, or stopped and saluted her with a mixture of freedom and pity which was more offensive than the cut direct; and, indeed, so keenly did the poor girl—who, but a few months before, had been the proudest and brightest in Hootsville—feel her present position that at last she pulled down her veil as her tears began to fall.

‘I know it is stupid to be hurt at all this; but—but I am not as strong as I thought. However, it will all be right; it will all be right when I have seen Walter’—and she dried her eyes as she whispered these hopes to herself—‘when I have seen him, and heard the truth;’ and then she burst out crying again.

But her weakness, if it was such, was quickly detected; for a hand was laid heavily on her shoulder, and a harsh voice growled,

‘Come, then; is it thus we commence anew, *ma fille*—*hein?*’

She at once recovered herself,

and calmly held up her cheek to be brushed by the bristly moustache of an old Frenchman, who stood leaning over her. She seemed accustomed to the tone and manner of this worthy gentleman, and was in no way surprised at her welcome, which, to say the least of it, was not demonstrative after a year's separation. But then he was her uncle, and many uncles are not demonstrative at any time. His name was Armand Sanzier, and his friends hinted that he had left his native country for the benefit of his fatherland. His antecedents were dubious; his addiction to drink, unlike the rest of his fellow-countrymen, was indubitable; and his temper and habits were so peculiar that even the gay people of Hootsville—and they were really not squeamish—showed no anxiety to cultivate his acquaintance.

'So then,' he asked, peering round suspiciously, and cursing a newsboy who stood bawling in front of them, 'you understood my letter? You are wise to come so readily to your old uncle and guardian now, my Delphine.'

'I understood nothing,' answered Delphine, 'but that it was absolutely necessary for law business, and so on, about the estate, for me to return as soon as I had recovered; but I did not understand your—your insinuations about Walter.'

'But yes,' returned the old man, avoiding the searching look in the girl's great gray eyes, 'he quite altered after your father's death. But,' he added, turning fiercely on his niece, 'you have not dared to disobey me in writing to the scoundrel—say then?'

'Let go my arm, please,' replied Miss Delphine Sanzier, 'and do not call Mr. Naughton names in my presence. He has written

and explained the reasons which prevented him from meeting me in England, as we had arranged; and I have written to him explaining everything—my coming back here, what you have said in your letter to me, and what you expect me to do. I hadn't time to write, except by this mail, and he will get that letter to-day. But I shall decline to believe one word you tell me about him until I hear the truth from his own lips. Had we not better leave the ship? These people seem to take an interest in us.' And she moved away.

'One word, my child,' muttered Armand, as he followed close at her side. 'Did he tell you that, by the death of some brutal English relative, he is now rich—that he resigns his appointment, that he starts to-morrow by this very steamer for the upper coast *en route* for Aden? Ha!' And he passed his arm round his niece, who leant, pale and fainting, against his shoulder, as he whispered this cruel news into her ear. But she quickly regained sufficient composure to walk firmly towards the gangway, after pointing out her pile of luggage to her uncle.

The latter, satisfied with the effect of his information, followed her off the ship, saying triumphantly to himself,

'Now, if I can only keep her out of that fellow's way till to-morrow, all will go well.'

II.

THE members of the Colonial Office in Hootsville were preparing to separate, after discharging their more or less arduous duties in a more or less zealous and able manner. The chief clerk and his

favourite satellites were assembled for 'just one peg' before braving the red dust and sunshine in the streets.

They were all very nice young men in their way, and were all beautifully arrayed in the height of Colonial fashion. Some of them had sauntered through a mute inglorious career at an English university, or had appeared at competitive examinations with a certain sameness of result. Some said they came to Susquannah for their health, though their stock of that rare commodity was enviable; others said they came out on 'spec'—and these, perhaps, spoke the truth.

There they were, however; and they tried to make the best of the 'refuge for the destitute,' as the Civil Service of Susquannah was facetiously termed.

The chief clerk, Mr. Shadrach Slinger, was in full swing, tumbler in one hand, cheroot in the other, hat on the back of the head, telling a really good thing about Mrs. Commissioner Grant. His subordinates, who knew the story, were preparing to laugh at the right time, when a tap was heard at the door.

'A dun! a dun!' sighed a diplomatist, slipping behind a screen from sheer force of habit, whilst the others promptly fumbled a few papers or looked into ledgers.

The chief clerk, very properly annoyed at this ill-timed interruption on the part of the public, hid his cigar and tumbler under his pith helmet, squared his shoulders, and, putting on his official scowl, bawled, 'Come in!'

Escorted by the office messenger, a smartly-dressed handsome young woman, all becks and smiles, entered unabashed, and begged the favour of an interview with the chief clerk.

The jaded officials at once took

the hint, and their hats as well, levelling Parthian glances at the pretty Creole as they strolled away.

'I say, Croizette, this won't do, you know!' ejaculated Slinger.

'Monsieur must excuse me; but has he seen the passenger-list of the Sentry, which arrived this morning?'

'Passenger-list! No. What if I had?' he asked pettishly.

'In that case,' said the *soubrette*, quietly seating herself in the coolest corner of the room, 'monsieur would have seen the name of my young mistress, Mademoiselle Sanzier.'

'The devil!' cried Mr. Slinger, looking aghast.

'Exactly, monsieur the chief clerk. But I have a note for Mr. Naughton, which must be placed in his hands to-night, *coûte que coûte*. Can you then, my dear gentleman, direct one to him?'

'It depends; but look here, I am not going to lend a helping hand to any mischief, you know.'

'There will be mischief,' said the girl significantly, 'if this Mr. Naughton forsakes my mistress.'

'I know nothing about that,' returned the chief clerk, who took a common-sense view of the matter.

'I am in despair,' cried the girl. 'I must return before sunset to Lagaras—it is a long uphill drive—or that old fox will suspect me. He has been watching my mistress the whole day as a cat does a mouse.'

'Who?' growled Mr. Slinger; 'that scoundrel of a Sanzier?'

'But yes. Pardon, monsieur,' continued the girl, 'can you suggest how I am to give this *billet* to Mr. Naughton?'

'I can't indeed,' was the answer; and the chief clerk stood on his hearthrug impatiently tugging at his moustache.

Suddenly a tall figure appeared at one of the windows, which opened down to the ground of the office courtyard.

'Ha! there you are! On the crank still!' cried the new-comer, stepping in over the sill, and closing the French shutters after him. 'Pouf! how blazing hot it is! Well, I've done my p.p.c. visita, thank goodness; paid my "ticks," packed my traps, and am off by the morning mail.' And, ignorant of the presence of the lady's-maid in the darkened room, he proceeded to light a cigar.

Slinger touched him on the elbow, and, looking up, he saw the girl standing in front of him, holding out the note.

'Croizette!' he mutters, dropping the lighted match. 'What's this?'

'A *billet* for Mr. Naughton. I have the honour to await an answer.' And she smiled at the chief clerk, who scowled in return.

Naughton seized the slip of paper, tore it open, and read:

'For Heaven's sake, see me before you go.'

He stood for a few moments lost in thought, and then, telling Croizette to follow him to his lodgings, he bade his friend good-bye, and hurried from the room.

III.

LAGARAS, the property of Delphine Sanzier, and the home of her uncle and guardian, lies at some height above Hootsville on the high-road over the mountain-range to St. Lucie, the trading-station on the northern side of the island of Susquannah. Nestling under the shelter of the hills which rise behind, and fronting

the straggling town and broad bay which lie below, the great comfortable buildings, vast courtyards and outhouses, with carefully tended grounds teeming with vegetation, and rich plantations stretching far away to the coast-line, are attractive enough to make many a man's mouth water; and this effect, it may be added, they certainly produced upon the present manager of the estate, good Armand Sanzier.

The evening gave every promise of a storm both without and within Lagaras. The fierce heat of the day had been almost intolerable, even for that climate, and now, when the sun had set, angry and flaming, a deadly stillness clung on the mountain-side, rendering distinct the distant boom of the waters of the bay, whilst at intervals came a faint hot wind sighing through the cañons of the Blancbec Range, stirring the heavy sultry air, and causing the creaking pine-trees to complain.

Inside the house, dinner, which most certainly was not of herbs and contentment therewith, had dragged its weary length through a profusion of dishes and messes, and the 'master'—for so Armand preferred to be styled—began to brace himself for the coming breeze by making a furious onslaught on the contents of the decanters, roundly cursing the frightened negroes who waited at table, and sending them off *en masse* to the warmest procurable region.

He sat for a short time gulping down his wine and watching closely his niece, who had moved to a chair near the open window.

'It appears that my beautiful niece is not pleased with what her old uncle has done for her benefit!' remarked Armand huskily, for he had dined not wisely, but too well.

'If you consider that, by trying to separate Walter and myself, you have acted for my benefit,' replied Delphine, in contemptuous tones, 'you are utterly mistaken.'

'Indeed?' sneered Armand. 'Was it not better that you should return to your proper home instead of staying in Paris, without protection—abandoned, so to speak, for that fellow never intended to carry out his promise to your father, I'll swear!'

'I am the best judge of that. But do you suppose I should have obeyed you in coming out here again, after the disgrace I have brought on my name—'

'La, la—*qu'importe*?' sneered the uncle.

'If,' continued Delphine, disregarding his interruption, 'I had not expected to meet Mr. Naughton here and be married to him?'

'Pardon, my child, but this dear Naughton does not now appear anxious to be married to you—*hein*?'

'We shall see!' she said, with a quiet smile.

'My faith! yes, to-morrow!' he laughed, bursting into the old song—

"Si tu veux être ma gigolette,
Oui, je serai ton gigolo."

'Let me tell you, my uncle Armand, that you are acting not only wickedly but madly. Walter, you know well, would have followed me, after I ran away to avoid exposure, had you not sued him for that money which my poor father had advanced him—'

'Business is business,' interposed Armand, holding up his wine to the light. 'But continue. This is amusing!'

'And now you have the audacity,' she cried excitedly, 'to use your authority as my guardian to prevent our ever seeing one another again! Ah, but it is droll!

This guardianship makes us laugh!'

'He laughs best who laughs last,' chuckled Sanzier.

'But, you know, my uncle,' she said eagerly, leaning towards him, 'we do not remain children always. There comes a time when one requires a guardian no longer—you understand? And if you are rash enough to reject Walter's proposals to-night, we shall—'

'Softly, softly, my little one!' growled Armand, rising with difficulty and confronting the angry girl. 'I anticipate no proposals from any of your Walters this fine night. The young Lothario to whom you have referred, ah! so frequently, leaves Hootsville at daybreak *en route* for St. Lucie and Aden. This I have already mentioned, if I mistake not;' and he resumed his seat with drunken gravity.

'That is true,' remarked Delphine absently, for she was listening to the sound of horses' hoofs and carriage-wheels, which were now audible through the open windows. 'But he arrives to pay you a parting visit, my uncle!' and she sprang joyfully towards the verandah.

'But no,' shouted Armand furiously, 'I'll have no more foolery in that quarter!' and, disregarding her struggles and entreaties, he caught her up in his powerful grasp, and carried her off to her chamber at the other end of the house.

'Rest there, my little marplot!' he gasped, with scarce breath enough left for swearing as he thrust her roughly into the room and turned the key upon her. 'Stop till I have sent your young lover about his business;' and he staggered back along the passages to receive his visitor.

IV.

ARMAND had scarcely returned to the dining-room before Walter Naughton, heedless of the remonstrances of the half-hearted negroes, presented himself. 'I must have a few words with you, Mr. Sanzier,' he said, standing defiantly in the doorway, 'whether you wish it or not.'

'So be it,' replied Armand; '*au large, canaille!*' and the servants vanished. 'One would not wish to turn *even a dog* out on a night like this. Ah, the accursed lightning!' he growled, half starting back as a bright flash gleamed through the room and the heavy rain plashed on the verandah. 'Now, my good young sir,' he continued, pointing to a chair and seating himself, 'may I offer you anything? No! Excuse me if I give myself one little glass;' for Armand's nerves were slightly shaken by his late athletic display at Delphine's expense, and by the presence of the unwelcome Naughton. 'And now for your few words, if you please.'

'You must pardon my intrusion at this hour, but I had no other opportunity before leaving the colony, for if I miss to-morrow's steamer I shall have to wait here another six weeks. Mr. Sanzier, what is the meaning of Delphine's sudden and unexpected return?'

'By whom unexpected?' asked Armand, smoking calmly.

'By myself, of course,' returned Naughton, beginning to chafe under the Frenchman's sarcastic tone.

'And by what right, may I have the honour of inquiring, does Mr. Naughton question the movements of my niece?'

'You know well enough,' said Naughton sternly, 'that, when Delphine foolishly ran away from home, I would gladly have made

amends for all, and was preparing to follow her, with her father's pardon and approval—say rather, anxious wish—that we should be married as soon as possible. But before I could do anything, poor Mr. Sanzier died suddenly, and then you threw every obstacle in my way to marrying your ward, utterly crippled me at that time by buying up my debts and suing me right and left. Yes,' continued Naughton, angry at the recollection of his troubles, 'I know you always owed me a grudge for that black-balling business. But we're quits now, by Jove! And when you found you could harass me no further in money matters you coolly forbade me ever to mention again your niece's name!'

'And you as coolly continue to do so,' remarked Armand, smothering a yawn and returning to the bottle.

'I will not detain you much longer. I merely wish you to know the extent of my "dishonourable conduct," as you once called it, by telling you that I have resigned my appointment, as I now have ample means, and that I intended meeting Delphine in England, where your consent to our marriage can be dispensed with—'

'*Après!*' interrupted Delphine's guardian, who, by the way, was getting rather thick in his speech.

'But you seem to have got wind of my intentions,' Naughton went on, taking no heed of the other's interruption; 'for you write and get poor Delphine to come out again, under some cock-and-bull story, for the purpose of getting her under your control, and hoping that I shall have left the place without meeting her.'

'And I see but little chance of a meeting, eh?' hiccupped the host; 'especially if monsieur de-

sires to sail at daybreak from the beautiful—the charming city of Hootsville. Ha, ha!

'Yes, yes. No doubt you have calculated it all very nicely,' said Naughton soothingly, whereat the elderly gentleman began to lose his temper; 'but we shall see. 'Twas a pity you forgot to reckon upon my feelings for Delphine. However, tell me once and for all, do you still refuse your consent to our marriage?'

'If I gave my consent, what arrangements would you make?'

'Arrangements? I don't quite follow you. We should certainly sell this place, if that's what you mean.'

And Naughton took a turn up and down the room, with the growing conviction that the old gentleman did not very well know what he was talking about.

'Ha!' muttered Armand, putting the lighted end of his cigar into his mouth, which proved unpalatable. 'And you wouldn't prefer keeping on Lagaras, and my managing it for you?'

'O no,' said Naughton dryly. 'Neither Delphine nor I have any love for the place, after what has happened here.'

'La, la! That is mere sentiment,' observed Armand, washing his mouth out with a strong dose of brandy. 'And you would then, I suppose, in the event of my allowing you to marry my niece—who is, you must recollect, under my control until she is of age, which will not be for another two years—'

'Yes, yes,' interposed Naughton wearily; 'but if you allow her to marry me here in Hootsville!'

'Will you,' inquired Armand, raising his bloodshot ferret-like eyes to Naughton—'will you investigate matters relative to—to—*bécause!* what is the word?—the

investment of the sums left by my late brother?'

'It will be my duty to inquire into everything concerning my wife's property,' said Naughton, looking Armand straight in the face.

'Then you shall never marry her!' screamed the old man, jumping up and kicking over the chair in his passion. 'Leave the house at once, great blackguard that you are!' he roared, shaking his fists in childish rage, 'or, by—' and after fumbling aimlessly for a second or two in his tail-coat pocket, he dashed raving from the room.

'Better not stay to be shot; he's mad drunk,' Naughton said to himself; and, striding across the floor, he threw open the shutters, vaulted over the verandah, and dropped his long form on to the lawn, a few feet below. His carriage, a light covered buggy, with a pair of wiry native-bred horses, was standing under the portico in charge of his servant, a white man, who, upon receiving certain whispered instructions from his master, handed the reins to Naughton, touched his hat, and sauntered away to the back premises.

And then, as they drove down the avenue, a flash of lightning indiscreetly disclosed the fact that, under the hood of the carriage, was Miss Sanzier, and that Mr. Naughton was kissing her.

V.

A FEW minutes afterwards, Armand Sanzier, revolver in hand, lurched furiously into the dining-room and found it empty. He floundered on to the balcony, but found nothing there; and, after firing a shot or two in the direc-

tion of his departing guest, his ardour began to cool under the steady downpour of tropical rain. Cursing freely, he came in again, and had recourse once more to the spirit-case. He then began to laugh, not heartily—he never did, under any circumstances—and suddenly snatching up a lamp, staggered across the floor.

With a very suspicious air of having been listening and watching, Miss Sanzier's maid, Croizette, confronted him in the doorway.

'What do you want here, *gamine*?' he growled, starting back with an oath and a hiccup.

'I come to warn monsieur not to wait for mademoiselle, who is a little ill, and who has gone to bed,' she said glibly, as if repeating a well-learned lesson.

'Ill or not, in bed or out of it,' he mumbled, 'I must tell her—ho, ho!—I must tell her at once how I have frightened away this gay lover of hers—ho, ho, ho!' And he had to steady himself against the wall until he had finished laughing over the rout and retreat of the panic-stricken Naughton. 'But you,' he said to the abigail, who, arms a-kimbo, had been joining merrily in his mirth, 'can go to bed. Where are the others?'

'The domestics have but shortly gone to the ball of quality at Hoots-ville. Mademoiselle gave them leave this afternoon,' she added, with a sly look. 'Ah, how I love the dance! but I dare not abandon my dear mistresses. Good-night then, Monsieur Armand.' And she ran off much amused.

'*A Chaillot, salope!*' was the gracious reply, as the good man of Lagaras started on his visit of comfort to his niece.

It was rather difficult steering for one in his state, and so the rats seemed to think, as he nearly trod on their tails in the gloomy

corridors; but he reached at last, without any accident, Miss Sanzier's part of the house. He knocked, at first softly, then viciously, calling to his niece to open. He tried the handle, but the door was locked and the key was gone. Thereupon he pummelled vigorously, and was even rude enough to kick at the lower panels, and, very soon losing the little patience he possessed, he put his huge shoulder to the daintily-painted door and sent it flying, lock and all.

Boiling with rage, he burst into the sitting-room, and dashing aside a chair, which stupidly stood in his way, he stumbled on into the bedchamber beyond.

Putting down the light, he peered about, calling, 'Delphine! Delphine!' But no Delphine replied. He staggered to the bed, and pulled aside the hangings. The bed was empty. He looked around and noticed the confusion of the furniture, the open drawers, the unclosed shutters, the undrawn mosquito curtains, the litter and disorder of a deserted room. And on the table near the lamp lay a tiny note addressed to him. He took it up and read,

'I shall return with my husband. *Au revoir!*—Thy niece, DELPHINE.'

He sat down, and tried to think. 'So she was gone, was she? To get married out of the colony, and to return some day with her husband. Her husband! Bah! A pretty couple, indeed! Return to prove that he has made an honest woman of her now. Ha, ha! The rascal must have been playing with him to-night? And that jade of a Croizette, too, must have been helping them, or how could they have managed? He would give that slut a piece of his mind to-morrow—perhaps strangle her;

who knows? Refuse his consent to the marriage? Of course. Was not the law of Susquannah with him, and was he going to give up the control of Delphine's wealth until he was obliged? No, no; not so foolish! Though much of it had been lost of late. Lost! Ah, that was the difficulty! A little longer time, and he could make good the money borrowed to meet those accursed Union shares, the Nevada business, that idiot Beudet's failure! Borrowed! That was all, say what they may. All would have come right but for that pig-headed bully of an Englishman. Rot him! And he sat brooding over the ruin of his schemes till he gradually grew sober, and a plan of action occurred to him. 'Half-past eleven! And Naughton's steamer sailed at day-break. Yes, there was still a chance of catching them. They couldn't be far ahead. And even if he didn't overtake them between this and Hootsville, he would go on board, and call on the captain to assist him in regaining the custody of his niece. If Naughton chose to face the consequences of abduction—yes, abduction—instead of quietly continuing his journey alone—alone, you understand?—well and good for Armand Sanzier. Ha, ha! he might turn the tables on them yet! And, restored to something like his old self by the prospect of revenge and success, he rushed from the room, ran along the passages, crossed the courtyard, and strode into the stables. Cursing the absence of the 'hands'—who were away dancing at Hootsville—he hastily saddled a horse, and clattered off in pursuit of his niece.

The storm had by this time passed off, and every now and then the moon came peeping out from behind the scudding clouds. The road between Lagaras and

Hootsville—scarcely broad enough to allow two carriages to pass with ease—descended through the valley of the Blancbec Range, now passing a deep ravine on the one side and high banks and masses of rockwork on the other, and now winding through the thick plantations above the town. But Sanzier knew every inch of the familiar road, and, thinking only of his meeting with Naughton, pushed at a reckless pace down the cañon.

In turning a shoulder of the highway—the St. Lucie route it was called—he suddenly sighted ahead of him a covered cart or buggy, whose bright lamps made lanes of light in the surrounding darkness.

'I have them! My God, I have them!' he roared in triumph, slashing his already terrified horse over the head in the heat of the moment. In a few seconds he was at the side of the carriage, calling fiercely to the driver to stop. The reply was a fearful blow across the face from the butt-end of a whip, and Sanzier reeled in his saddle. The blow would have been repeated had not a girl in the back of the cart flung herself on the driver's upraised arm, and arrested the stroke, while Sanzier, sick and stunned, sank forward on his horse's neck, and thus failed to see that his assailant was Naughton's servant, and that the woman was Croizette.

But now the driver again urged on his team, and rapidly descended the hill towards Hootsville, leaving Sanzier behind, swaying to and fro in his stirrups. The effects of the blow, however, very quickly wore off, leaving Sanzier in a more infuriated state than ever, and he charged down the steep and narrow road after the buggy, bent on vengeance, and reckless of the consequences.

He soon caught them up, and pursued and pursuers, side by side, tore down the incline, on their left a deep ravine, on their right a wall of cliff.

'Stop, or I'll fire!' he yelled, drawing his pistol, as he galloped on the near side of the cart, perilously near the precipice. But his threat was wasted, for the horses had now got beyond their driver's control, and, dragging the frail vehicle at breakneck speed, they plunged, bumped, and rattled over the wretched road, still further excited by Sanzier's shouts and Croizette's screams.

Sanzier levelled at the near wheeler, and fired. The horse fell, ploughing up the mud and stones, and capsizing the cart. The hood struck Sanzier's shoulder before he could rein up, and his horse swerved against the paling at the edge of the ravine. It smashed like tinder, while the

ground broke away from beneath the struggling hoofs of the frightened animal. Sapped by the late rains, a huge piece of the roadside slipped, and, before Sanzier could disengage himself, horse and man were hurled out of sight.

Meanwhile, Naughton and Delphine were driving quietly in the opposite direction, along the highway from Lagaras to St. Lucie, intending to wait at that port for the steamer with their servants and luggage. But, upon hearing the fate of Sanzier, they returned at once to Hootsville, attended by the bruised but faithful Croizette, and her companion, Naughton's servant, with his arm in a sling.

The body of Armand Sanzier was afterwards recovered, and now rests in the cemetery of the Catholic church at Hootsville.

Lagaras has long been sold, and Susquannah knows Delphine and her husband no more.

THE OLD BOOKSTALL.

'*Ullis' Miseric and the World's Madness.*'

THAT is the fantastic title borne by a work of extreme rarity, to which this further explanation is appended, 'Discovering the Devils incarnate of this age (1596).'

Its author, Thomas Lodge, a scholar of the Merchant Taylors' School, a student of poetry and philosophy at Oxford, and a student of law at Lincoln's Inn, has already been introduced to the frequenters of 'The Old Bookstall' (see p. 701, vol. xliii.). When this work appeared, he was a student of physic, and had been a player and playwright, &c.

'This age (1596)' was that of the English drama's first and grandest triumphs—the age of Shakespeare, when actors were poets, and poets were dramatists, and much envy, strife, and jealousy were begetting amongst them much 'miseric.' We glean from Henslow the pawnbroker's diary that between 1591 and 1597 more than one hundred new plays were performed by four only of the ten or twelve theatrical companies then in being.

The chief playwrights were George Peele, John Lily, Christopher Marlowe, Robert Greene, Tom Nash, Samuel Daniel, Thomas Kyd, Anthony Munday, George Chapman, John Forde, Henry Cheetle, and the author of this quaint old pamphlet.

They shone out from a great cloud of other more or less talented dramatists—Watson, Davis, Anthony Brewer, Constable, Hathaway, Bale, Porter, Smith, Wilson, Churchyard, and others.

There was also a poor youngman from Warwickshire, whose growing fame and prosperity had strongly moved the envy and indignation of most of the 'college pens,' because, coming amongst them from a paltry little country grammar-school, his popularity threatened to exceed that of the best from Oxford and Cambridge. Beginning as an actor and adapter of old plays, he had of late taken to playwriting on his own account, and was described, in the words of his enemy and traducer, Robert Greene, as a conceited, vain-glorious, 'upstart crow,' beautified with their feathers. I need hardly add that his name was William Shakespeare.

In that year, also, the son of a clergyman and stepson of a bricklayer, Ben Jonson, was coming to the front with mighty promise of growing excellence.

To return to this fragile relic of that mighty age, the work upon the 'Stall' before us, a mere tract, tender to touch, and discoloured by age.

It is in prose, and tells how that serpent of ancient days, Satan, sent into the world for its contamination and temptation seven devils, named respectively Leviathan (Pride), Mammon (Avarice), Asmodeus (Lust), Belzebub (Envy), Baalberith (Anger), Beelphegor (Gluttony), and Astaroth (Sloth). They are gifted with charms to tempt the eye, with eloquence to deceive the ear, and cunning to puzzle the senses. Working in the hearts and thoughts

of men it is their mission to beget other fiends, 'to the general mischief of all nations.' These are vain-glory, boasting, unholy ambition, hypocrisy, curiosity, pride of dress, ingratitude, scandal-mongering, envy, detraction, false praise, contempt, &c., which stand for 'the monstrous and strange devils' bred in that age by Mammoth, Asmodeus, Belzebub, with the 'incarnate monsters begotten by the arch-devil Baalberith,' the 'intemperate and unnatural devils raised by Beelphegor, Prince of Belly Cheere,' and 'the lumpish and heavy fiends begotten by the arch-devil Astaroth.'

Let me open at the page which treats of Belzebub (Envy) and his strange and monstrous brood of devils, and at a chapter I select because it has some interesting observations on contemporary writers, for an extract which will convey a satisfactory idea of the subject and style of the whole :

'The first was called Hare Vertue, or, in words of more circumstance, sorrow for another man's good successes, who, after he had learned to lie of Lucian, to flatter with Aristippus, and conjure of Zoroaster, wandered awhile in Fraunce, Germanie, and Italy, to learn languages and fashions, and now of late daies is stoln into England to deprave all good deserving. . . . You shall know him by this ; he is a foule lubber, his tongue tipt with lying, his heart steeled against charity ; he walks for the most part in black, under colour of gravity, and looks as pale as ye wizard of the ghost which cried so miserably at ye theater (like an oister-wife), "Hamlet, revenge !" He is full of infamy and slander, insomuch as if he ease not his stomach in detracting somewhat or some man before noontide, he falls into a fever that holds him while supper-time ; he

is alwaies devising of epigrams, or scoffes and grumbles, necromances continually, although nothing crosse him ; he never laughs but at other men's harms ; briefly, in being a tyrant over men's fames, he is a very Titus (as Virgil saith) to his owne thoughtes.

"Titijq. vultus inter
Qui semper lacerat comestq. mentem."

The mischief is that, by grave demeanour and newes-bearing, he hath got some credite with the greater sort, and maine fowles there bee that, because he can pen prettilee, hold it gospell whatever hee writes or speakes ; his custom is to prefer a foole to credite, to despight a wise man, and no poet lives by him that hath not a flout of him. Let him spie a man of wit in a tavern, he is an arrant dronckard ; or but heare that he partes a fraie, he is a hare-brained quarreller. Let a scholar write, "Tush," saith he, "I like not these common fellows !" Let him write well, he hath stolen it out of some note-book ; let him translate, "Tut, it is not of his owne !" Let him be named for preferment, he is insufficient because poore. No man shall rise in this world except to feed his envy. No man can continue in his friendship who hateth all men.'

This picture is palpably drawn from life ; and looking round amongst the 'wits' who then lived, and of whom my own reading has told me most, I am inclined to say the cap fits no one so well as it does Robert Greene. It is not Lilly, whom Lodge describes as 'famous for facility in discourse ;' nor Spencer, whom he says was 'best read in ancient poetry ;' nor Daniel, of whom he writes as 'choice in word and invention ;' nor even sarcastic and 'bitter-word Tom Nash,' whom he calls 'the true English Aretine,'

and of whom an old play in which he figured in 1606 said,

'Let all his faults sleep with his mournful chest,
And there for ever with his ashes rest.
His style was witty, though he had some gall:
Something he might have mended, so may all;'

and of whom the author of *The Ant and the Nightingale* wrote,

'If in bitterness thou rail, like Nash,
Forgive me, honest soul, that term thy phrase
Railing; for in thy works thou wert not rash,
Nor didst affect in youth that private praise.
Thou hadst a strife with that Tergemini;*
Thou hurst not them till they had injured thee.'

No, it was not Nash, but most probably that clever, popular, disgusting reprobate, poet, and author, Robert Greene, who, as he confesses in his *Repentance*, had been drawn to 'march into Italy and Spain' by 'wags as lewd' as himself, had led in London a life of unconstrained debauchery, had given offence to such of his friends as 'were honourable and of good calling,' and came to be universally despised and rejected, an outcast among his fellows, and welcome only to the hostesses of a few alehouses, 'who,' as he says, 'commonly for my inordinate expenses, would make much of me until I were on the score for more than I ever meant to pay by twenty nobles thick.' One of his fellows of the theatre, Gabriel Harvey, who knew Greene well, says of him, 'Who in London hath not heard of his dissolute and licentious living; his fond disguisings as a Master of Arts (!) with ruffianly hair, unseemly apparel, and more unseemly com-

pany; his vain-glorious and Thrasonically boasting; his piping, extemporizing, and Tarletonizing (clowning); his apish counterfeiting of every ridiculous and absurd toy; his fine cozening of cheats, and fine cheating of cozeners; his villainous cogging and foisting, his monstrous swearing and horrible false-swearing; his impious profaning of sacred texts; his other scandalous and blasphemous ravings; his riotous and outrageous surfeiting; his continual shifting of lodgings; his plausible mustering and banquetting of roystering acquaintances at his first coming; his beggarly departing in every hostesses debt; his infamous resorts on the Bank-side, Shoreditch, Southwark, and other filthy haunts; his obscure lurking in baseest corners; his pawning of his sword, cloak, and what not, when money came short; his impudent pamphletting, fantastical interluding, and desperate libelling; . . . his contemning of superiours, deriding of others, and defying all good order! . . . Alas, even his fellow-writer, a proper young man, if advised in time (Thomas Nash), that was a principal guest at that fatal banquet (Greene's death was attributed to it) of pickled herrings (I spare his name, and in some respects wish him well*), came never more at him, but either would not, or happily could not, perform the duty of an affectionate and faithful friend.'

Does this not fit the description Lodge gives of one 'full of infamy and slander,' who had 'wandered awhile in France, Germanie, and Italy, . . . and now of late daies is stohn into England to deprave all good deserving'?

Greene's oft-quoted attack upon Shakespeare, describing him 'with his tygres heart wrapt in a player's

* The three Harveys, between whom and Nash a long paper-war raged so fiercely that the prelates Whitgift and Bancroft at last interposed to suppress it, in the name of public decency and Christian charity.

* See previous note.

hide,' as 'beeing an absolute Johannes factotum,' and 'in his owne conceyt the only Shakescene in a countrey,' drew forth a protest from Cheetle in 1592, who said of Shakespeare, 'Myselfe haue seene his demeanour no less ciuill than he excellent in the qualitie he professes. Besides, diuers of worship haue reported his vprightness of dealing, which argues his honesty, and his facetious grace in writing that aproues his art.'

Incidentally I have shown the quarrels amongst the poets and players in which Greene, Harvey, Cheetle, and Nash played parts. They were representative of other feuds, in which other players and poets took sides; and it is in reference to all these that Lodge, in concluding his account of 'the great devil Belzebub,' nobly wrote:

'All you unnamed professors or friends of poetry (but by me inwardly honoured), knit your industries in private to unite your fames in publicke; let the strong stay up the weake, and the weake march under conduct of the strong; and all so unbattle yourselves, that hate of vertue may not imbase you. But if besotted by vain-glory, emulation, and contempt, you fall to neglect one another, *Quod Deus omen auetat*, doubtless it will be as infamous a thing shortly to present any book, whatsoever learned, to any Mæcenas in England, as it is to be headsman in any free city of Germanie.'

With this last extract I tenderly and carefully restore this dingy old pamphlet to its place on the 'Stall,' and close my reading from, and gossiping about, it.

A. H. WALL.

'GOLDEN GIRLS.'

A Picture-Gallery.

BY ALAN MUIR, AUTHOR OF 'CHILDREN'S CHILDREN,' 'LADY BEAUTY ;
OR CHARMING TO HER LATEST DAY,' ETC.

CHAPTER LX.

LOVERS IN BLISS—AND THEN ?

OUR little Violet, sensitive, animated, and beautiful, did not know what it is to love. The master passion had never exercised even a momentary sway in her innocent breast. From her earliest childhood her course of health had been weak and fitful, intersected by spaces of great suffering, with patches of comparative enjoyment and strength here and there. When she came to the verge of womanhood the shadow of sickness still overhung her life, and the probability of early death was always full in view. Besides, she was shut in from the common current of things. She did not ride nor dance nor walk, nor go to picnics and pastimes, like other girls. In the bright joyous world of youth and pleasure she moved like a stranger in a strange land ; scarcely of the earth at all ; a beautiful pilgrim, whose very expression in its mingled sadness and repose seemed to whisper that she had surrendered one state and was ready for another—a living embodiment of the noble picture drawn long ago of those who have here no continuing city, but seek one to come. Violet knew nothing of love. Of course she had read about love, and, interpreting the term by the highest feeling her experience could

produce—her own affection for Mildred—she had always read the word as denoting a sentiment formed of tenderness and habit, admiration and benevolence. Of the passion which comes into the soul like a flood, finding unsuspected inlets and channels of feeling, creating the nature anew, giving an interpretation of life which intoxicates the young spirit—startling, wonderful, delicious ; illuminating a thousand secrets of matter and spirit by one overpowering revelation : of this Violet was absolutely ignorant. And now, as she was drifting peacefully towards the point where this mortal vesture of passionate flesh is laid down, it seemed likely that she would die in the sweet innocence in which she had lived, and that her quiet eyes would close for ever without being once lighted by Love's potent ray. A snowdrop, a lily, a rose would not be a more living image of life and beauty untouched by passion than was Violet this evening, watching the sunset in the west, with no agitation, nothing except a sister's affection in her breast, and in such harmony with Fate that she felt as ready to die as the flowers in the grass beneath her were ready to close their eyelids for the coming night.

When Sholto Alexander came she welcomed him with perfect composure. Why should she feel disturbed whose sole thought was

her sister's happiness, which she felt assured it lay in her power to make good? Sholto was full of other thoughts. The whole love of his young and vigorous life was confined in his breast—a throbbing tide chafing against its barriers. His heart was like a mountain-lake swept by wild gusts that lashed its waters into madness; hers, too, was like a mountain-lake set in the quiet hills, unruffled and at rest, with the heavens embosomed in its tranquil deeps.

The evening was now grown much darker, and Sholto could but dimly see Violet's form stretched on her couch; and of the prostration in her wasting features he saw nothing at all. She asked him a commonplace question about the medicine she was taking, which he answered readily; and she, seeing that he was silent, resolved not to let him go until her work was done. So she began to talk upon general subjects. He grew more at ease, and replied to her questions with animation and even with sprightliness; for, after all, what lover but must feel gratified to be thus alone with the girl of his heart? She asked him several questions about Dr. Jubilee, whose quaint character had struck her greatly; and as Sholto described his genial eccentricities, he was surprised to hear from the dim couch one of Violet's tinkling peals of laughter. Her laugh had in it, as has often been said, the very finest note of fun and the enjoyment of fun. Perfectly delicate, with a silvery tinkle which was rather musical than mirthful, there was yet in it a drollery which was infectious and irresistible because so hearty and spontaneous. That laugh gave Sholto quite a new idea of Violet; but could he have seen the face which the evening shades concealed,

how bitter his amazement would have been!

Artlessly enough to all appearance, Violet led the conversation on from point to-point until she was able to mention her sister.

Sholto felt no flutterings of heart at the sound of Mildred's name, and he replied in a commonplace way, so that Violet took courage to say, with an unembarrassed air,

'I hope this visit to Tickenham will do my sister good. She is not so strong as she fancies herself.'

'Is there any particular weakness?' Sholto asked. He was glad that a professional matter should arise in the conversation, which now might be a little prolonged. 'Any chest trouble?'

'No,' answered Violet. 'She has had a great deal of anxiety. I have not been strong, and our position is a difficult one. Of course you know how rich we are. Mildred is so sought after and run after by people—well, she thinks they only care for her money.'

'That,' Sholto said, with an emphasis of which he was not conscious, 'is natural—I mean it is natural for her to think so.'

'You must understand me,' Violet continued eagerly, for in a moment she interpreted Sholto's tone in her own way. 'Mildred is not so mean or vain as to think that all men want her, or her fortune either. I am sure no one would be readier to acknowledge disinterestedness than she, or unselfish affection.'

Here the conversation became a kind of maze, where Violet took one path and Sholto another.

Violet immediately said quietly, but in a slow impressive way, that for her part she never could see why a poor man might not love a rich woman with the most

self-forgetting affection. Her tone denoted some thought unexpressed.

Sholto's heart began to beat. He was full of love for Violet. One singular token of apparent regard had already passed between them. Little wonder that he waited in suspense for her next sentence.

'I can only say for myself,' Violet continued, 'that if I were to marry, I should rather choose as a husband a hard-working man in some active profession who really loved me, than do like some rich girls, try to get a title'—she laughed at her own idea—'or to find a husband as rich again as themselves, and heap fortune upon fortune.'

Sholto could hardly draw a breath. Love's delirium was upon him; and, indeed, appearances were such that he might reasonably suppose that Violet, without the smallest sacrifice of maiden modesty, was intimating that mere scruples about wealth and poverty need not deter him from declaring his love.

Meanwhile she—thinking of Mildred, but, from motives of delicacy, speaking of herself—repeated in several forms what she had already said, that where true affection existed money was not to be named.

The old sculptor whose statue turned into living flesh and blood before his eyes could scarcely have felt greater surprise or been more transported with delight than Sholto. The impossible had become actual. What was once at an immeasurable distance was now close at hand. But still he dared not speak. As yet he could not trust his senses nor his reason. The transition was too amazing; the reality was too brilliant.

'What I should say to a man who loved me'—so Violet went

on in her low impressive tone—'if he was poor and good, would be: "Do not hesitate to declare your love because I am rich; let that be my obstacle, but not yours."'

On Violet's lips this speech meant only 'If you love Mildred, tell her so.' In Sholto's ears it said, as with a sigh of confession, 'You love me, and I love you.' He was lost in admiration of the equal delicacy and firmness with which she had made her meaning plain. He would not wait—not for one farther word.

'Violet!' he cried, going to her side, and taking her hand in his, 'you know—you must know—what you have been saying. When I first saw you a little child in the garden, I loved you. Year after year, though I have seen you so seldom, your face has been before me. I know I love you truly. If every shilling you possess were swept away to-night I would love you more than I do now—more fully because more freely. It would be strength and joy and life to feel that you needed me and my work to make you happy. I do not know what you will say or think, or whether you will be angry; but I must tell you the whole truth now. I love you for yourself alone. I love you because to me you are the image of all goodness and sweetness and beauty. I am poor; and if you had not spoken in this way to-night, you would never have known my love for you. But you were right to say it; you were right to despise your riches, just as I despise them. Violet!—life, love, and joy to me, whatever I may be to you—my heart is yours while it beats!'

It was Violet's turn for amazement now. Surprise struck her dumb. She did not withdraw her hand from his, though it flut-

tered like a struggling dove. She was totally confounded by this bewildering disclosure.

Sholto misunderstood her ailence. He knelt beside her, and poured into her ears a succession of sentences which, like strokes from some skilful artist's pencil, delineated the features of his great passion with marvellous sureness and swiftness.

Trembling, the girl listened to the strange story. She felt the pressure of her lover's hand; his breath was on her cheek; his every accent seemed to interpret to her more and more of a mystery unknown to her until this breathless moment. And now Nature began to touch her frail and innocent breast in certain of its most secret and delicate strings. She too—this dying girl—felt an entrancing languor, strangely mingled with a vague desire, rise like a new vitality within her. Was she to be recalled to life from the dusky borders of the grave by this wonder-working Power? Here was the Power unknown, and yet akin to the heart, which seemed as at a magic touch to rise from death, and beat as it never had beaten before. Still Sholto held her hand, fluttering more faintly now, as if the struggling dove were growing reconciled to captivity. Still he told her, in hot words, how he loved her, and besought her to whisper back if she loved him. And this new sensation, fearful and joyful, kept growing and rising in her breast, until it seemed as if her very being would cease, and she would expire in this onset of new and terrible delight.

At last she surrendered herself to what as yet she hardly knew to be love. She sank back on her couch. She replied to all he had said with one long, low, passionate sigh, which collected the

whole volume of her emotion and uttered it in a breath.

It was the first exchange of the language of love these two had ever made. Momentary and inarticulate, still it whispered to him of tenderness replying to tenderness; of joy in the consciousness of being beloved; of Love itself born on this instant in her breast, and announcing its own nativity with a sigh full of rapture, but still a sigh. Sholto said no more. Speech had done its duty. Expressive silence must utter what no words could convey. He laid his hot cheek against her hand, and surrendered himself to bliss.

For, to all who truly love, Heaven is merciful. All who know true love shall also taste true joy, though it be only for such space as it takes the lightning to traverse the sky. These lovers were ensphered in bliss for a moment of time, rounded by a cloudless firmament of delight that hid the dull vision of common things. All realities were forgotten. Not the least flock of recollection of what had been or dread of what must be hereafter troubled that serene sky of peace. For Violet fact had ceased. She forgot her illness; she forgot Mildred; she forgot every outward thing except her lover kneeling beside her, and the mysterious sentiment he had kindled in her breast.

Yes! Heaven, merciful to all who truly love, did not forget these two. There at least was one moment of happiness for them. One moment when Fate on golden wings carried them above the world into this pure ether, where there is neither cloud nor shadow, but joy alone. What are spells of existence like these measured by our poor standards of almanac or dial, of rising or

setting suns! In the region whither these happy souls had been borne time and its measurements are not known. The zone is put round a whole universe of sensation between a few tickings of the clock. An infinite of feeling is trodden in a few seconds of what we call time.

Then, as reality broke upon her again, with a low cry of anguish, a moan such as a wounded animal gives as it turns despairing and sees its doom, so Violet cried,

'O Sholto! O Sholto! O my darling! my darling! I have to die! I have to die!'

CHAPTER LXI.

A NIGHT OF WEEPING.

WHEN Mildred returned home that evening, she saw Violet sitting upon her couch, supporting herself with one hand, while the other was pressed against her forehead. There was a strange wild light in her eyes; her cheek was crimson; and her attitude like that of one in a trance. Mildred flew to her side.

'Darling!' she cried, removing the hand that was pressed against her brow, 'how excited you look! Has anything happened?'

'Tell me, Mildred,' Violet said, fixing her eyes upon her sister, with a strange composure, as if neither her entrance nor her question had the least broken the connection of her thoughts, 'must I die?'

'What do you mean, darling?' For a moment Mildred evaded a question which she dared not answer.

'Must I die?' Violet asked again, slowly and emphatically, with her luminous eyes piercing into her sister's soul.

'My darling! my darling!' Mildred cried, caressing her, 'how can I tell you that? The doctor says you are weak and ill, but he has known people in your state go on for a long, long time.'

'But they die,' Violet answered, in a tone which struck awe into Mildred's breast. 'They go on for a time, shorter or longer, but always sickly, and then they die! They wait and pine and moan and hope in vain for health—even for a month of health; but no; and at last the end comes, and they die. They go from the skies and the flowers, and from human faces and from joy and delight, out into the lonely darkness.'

As Violet said this she let her head sink into her hands, where she buried her face. There was no sound of a sob, no tremor of the frame, only her face was not seen. Mildred was quite horror-struck by this outburst of feeling, for Violet had lately been talking of her own death quietly and even cheerfully, while the very mention of the word was heart-breaking to Mildred. This sudden recoil from death in a sufferer hitherto angelic in her resignation was fearful to contemplate.

Meanwhile Violet, with her face still hidden, repeated slowly and with infinite depth of expression the same words over and over,

'They die! They die! They die!'

While Mildred, not knowing how to act, was still watching her, Violet uncovered her face and looked up.

'O, it is hard!'

'What can have happened?' Mildred asked piteously. 'You seemed so peaceful and happy a few hours ago.'

'A few hours ago,' Violet repeated, speaking as if that was

remote indeed. Then in a more collected voice, and in a tone of most sober and rational conviction, she said, 'A few hours ago I had never really lived. I never knew what life is and what it may be until to-night. Peaceful! happy! Yes; for I was surrendering a treasure whose price I did not know.'

'You have been reading some book that has upset you,' Mildred said, bending over her. 'I am sure you have been reading some strange book.'

'A strange book!' Violet repeated again, with a sigh which might have come from a heart cleft in twain. 'A strange book, Milly! Yes; with such language, such thoughts, such pictures! You are right. I have been reading a strange book.'

This she uttered in a mechanical way, shaking her head, her eyes set on the empty air, her thoughts dealing with some absorbing matter. As for Mildred, she did not dare to speak; but as she watched Violet's face she saw the delicate features and the remote eyes change their expression, as if with the approach of a resolve which gathered all the powers of her being together.

'Mildred!' she called out. Her voice rang through the room like a clarion. 'I will not die! I am going to live! I will not—I cannot leave the world!' Then her voice changed into a tone of bewildered supplication. 'What can they do for me? What medicines can they give me? What place can they send me to?' Then, pushing back her mass of dark hair from her forehead: 'I have only one life to live, and I will not lose it. Look at our money! we can do anything. We can buy anything. O Milly, help me—help me not to die!'

Poor Mildred, terrified and almost broken-hearted, thought it

best to acquiesce in her sister's unaccountable mood.

'I will help you, darling!' she cried. 'We will both do all we can. Who knows?'—hope flashed even into Mildred's heart—'who knows? you *may*, you *may*!'

'Send for Dr. Jubilee!' cried Violet, struck with a new thought, and stretching out her hand abruptly. 'Send. I must speak with him plainly, face to face.'

'To-morrow, darling, to-morrow,' Mildred said. 'Not to-night.'

'To-night,' repeated Violet, with irresistible determination. 'This very night! Send for him at once, and let me be with him quite alone.'

Wondering and fearing, Mildred obeyed. Violet's mood was altogether new; and her strange excitement of manner was not at all more remarkable than her determination that Dr. Jubilee should be sent for at once.

In about half an hour Dr. Jubilee appeared, and was shown into the room, where, by Mildred's directions, he was at once left alone with Violet. It was curious to see how all the little Doctor's whim and oddity vanished as he sat down by the couch, and how his rugged face grew soft with sympathy as he took the girl's wasted hand.

'How are you to-night, my child?' he said gently. 'Are you in suffering?'

'Doctor!' Violet said, fixing her eyes on him just as she had fixed them on Mildred, 'am I to die? Tell me that.'

'Leave yourself in God's hands, my dear,' the old Doctor said kindly, 'and in the hands of your friends. Ask no questions.'

'That will not do, Doctor!' she answered, with a firmness which amazed the physician. 'I sent for you to find out. You must tell me. Am I to die?'

'My dear young lady,' Dr. Jubilee said, remonstrating. Then dropping into a more fatherly tone: 'My poor suffering lamb! can you bear to be told?'

Violet knew all when he said that. She put her hand to her heart, and said, with a little gasp,

'I can bear it. I must know.'

'God is going to take you to Himself,' the old Doctor said, with infinite tenderness in his homely voice.

'I cannot live?'

'You cannot live.'

When he had said this, Violet let her face sink into her hands, just as she had done with Mildred, only at first she spoke nothing. The Doctor looked down upon her with eyes full of pity. And it was a strange sight, the country physician in his homely attire gazing at the sick girl, whose long dark tresses fell down like a veil, half hiding her white wasted hands. At last a low moaning voice, perfectly articulate and fraught with misery, came from between the thin fingers:

'Why does God kill me when I am so young, and might be so happy?'

The Doctor heard the voice, and, scarcely moving a muscle, he answered back in solemn tones,

'Child—dear child!—I have often asked myself that very question when I have stood beside such as you. I think it must be because He loves you better than those He leaves behind.'

Still the face was hidden, and again from between the thin fingers the voice came from the veiled lips,

'It cannot be love! To cut me down like a flower! O Dr. Jubilee, you don't know how happy I could be if I could only live—only live and love!'

'But, dear child,' the Doctor said, with a tremor in his tone

which showed how far his logic was from satisfying his own heart, 'it is a troublesome world—"the waves of this troublesome world"—ah, those are the words I was trying to remember—truer were never spoken. There will not be many more beating upon you,' he went on, with artless eloquence. 'Where you are going the tempests are all over. I think of the lines they sometimes sing at the church yonder,

"Trouble ceases

On that tranquil happy shore."

You will be there soon, my suffering lamb,' Dr. Jubilee said, forgetting that he was only a country doctor, and his patient so far above him, and stooping his head, while tears ran down his roughened cheeks. 'You will very soon be there. A few waves more will drive you into calm that can never be broken.'

But again the hidden voice replied,

'I don't want it. I want to live, and to love. O life and love! Think what it is to die and never to have known either!'

'It is written, my little child,' Dr. Jubilee said, feeling about, as it were, for some word to comfort this extreme misery—'it is written that eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, the things which God has prepared—'

Again the hidden voice answered,

'Yes—it is written!'

He saw the bowed head shaking slowly, as if to signify that this was not enough. As if to say, 'Yes, written on an old leaf of parchment, while mine is a living beating human heart!'

There came a solemn silence in the room, and Dr. Jubilee stood regarding his patient with the same pitying eyes; and she, with her bowed face still hidden in her hands, neither moved nor uttered

a sound. At last she lifted up her face; not the face which she had hidden, but another, an older face, a face whose expression might have been the handiwork of years of anguish.

'Thank you, Doctor, for being so candid,' she said, in a voice the composure of which was almost startling with this look of agony. 'Will it be very long?'

'A few weeks—a month or two,' he replied. 'We can say no more.'

'Thank you. Good-night.'

Dr. Jubilee left the room with an aching heart, and Mildred stole in softly.

'Mildred,' Violet said, in the same composed voice, 'if I lie awake to-night, and you hear me move, or sigh, or even sob, don't speak to me. If I want you I can call you. Only let me be alone in silence till the morning.'

Awestruck by the request, and by the tone of solemn authority in which it was delivered, Mildred simply promised to obey, and scarcely another word was exchanged between the sisters that night. Only Mildred wondered and watched with agony her little Violet's face, so white, so tense with repressed misery.

The light was lowered in the room where they slept, and Mildred crept into her bed. Then she heard Violet's sorrow begin to flow out in an unintermitting stream. Low sobs, low moans, heart-broken sighs succeeded each other through several weary hours. Mildred would have given worlds to have been at her darling's side, trying to comfort her; but the memory of her sister's charge restrained her, and she lay on, letting her own tears flow in silent sympathy with those of the dying girl.

How slow those dark hours dragged by! At last, clear through

the deep dark midnight, the church-clock rang out Two.

And at that moment Mildred noticed that Violet's sobbing was stilled. Then followed one or two irrepressible convulsive gasps of grief, like those of a child that has gone to sleep crying. Then even these were hushed, and the room grew quite still.

Slowly the summer dawn stole in, and the furniture began to emerge from the darkness, and Violet lay on, making no sound; and Mildred, rejoiced to think that the weeping girl was asleep at last, would scarcely draw a deep breath, lest that blessed slumber should be stirred. And once again that perpetual wonder of the opening day was repeated in all its grandeur, and Nature, awaking in all her flowers and streams and trees, and in her wide fields, from the misty sleep of night, put on her garments of light with singing. The birds carolled out; the early butterflies winnowed by; the bees hummed on their golden way from blossom to blossom; the sun had risen in his majesty; and all the face of the earth was glad.

Then Mildred stole softly out of bed and to her darling's side, and looked upon her face. Of all the anguish of the night before not a trace was left. Peace, deep peace, was fixed on the fair innocent features; and the bosom rose and fell gently, as if it might be to the action of some happy dream.

As she gazed, Violet opened her eyes and smiled on Mildred; and Mildred saw that the peace in Violet's face was in her eyes also, and in her heart.

'I have been sleeping, dear,' the sick girl said gently. 'And I have been dreaming. Mamma came to me—so like! Just the hair and eyes and face as in the picture. I had been crying in my

dream, and she came and put out her hand and wiped my eyes, and I heard her say as she did it, "There, my daughter! that is the last tear you will ever shed!"

CHAPTER LXII.

IN WHICH HECTOR BADGER SHOWS FIGHT.

MR. DANIEL RUDDOCK quite enjoyed his little holiday in Tickenham. To find himself once more decoying a fellow creature into a pecuniary transaction of a ruinous kind was such a reminder of his early days that Daniel declared several times—without reason assigned—that he felt young again. He managed Samuel Badger with great judgment. If at any time the transaction should be made public, who could blame Daniel? Daniel had letters (every one signed, 'Yours affectionately, Samuel Badger'); letters long and letters short, commanding letters and exhorting letters, private and confidential letters, and friendly letters; quite a pile. The burden of all was, 'Sell your land to me.' And Daniel docketed all these letters, and laid them aside carefully against the stormy day when Mrs. Badger would discover how fatally her simple husband had been duped. It must be remarked that, in addition to the desire of making money, Daniel had another and inner thought in his mind, which was a powerful inducement to complete his design upon Samuel Badger. If he got Samuel and Sally into his power, he would have a fine weapon against them in case Hector should really win Lucy's affections, and Lucy on her part should prove intractable, and run counter to her parents' will. Daniel knew well

enough that Beatrice would not approve of his taking Samuel in, because at Middleborough the affair would be sure to get out, and people would pass just judgment on Daniel in spite of all these specious letters. But Daniel knew also that Beatrice would warmly applaud him for getting the Badgers into his power, so that he could force terms with them in the contingent matrimonial difficulty. Here, then, was Daniel's position: there was the present diversion of entrapping Samuel Badger, which, from the sportsman's point of view, was a pleasant relaxation; next, there was the solid fact that Daniel might get three thousand pounds for a bit of land not worth one; finally, there was the possibility that for value received, in the way of reducing Hector and Lucy to obedience, Daniel might return the money, or part thereof, to Samuel, and retire from the negotiation with the character of a straightforward and generous man. Daniel thought over these things, and chuckled in secret so often that he very nearly made his cough chronic.

As for poor Samuel Badger, he had not spent such a month in all his life. He had to get his money ready, and to peruse all sorts of documents, and make all kinds of preparations in absolute secrecy. He was never easy in his mind for ten minutes together. The dread of being discovered by his wife hung over him perpetually, like a thunder-cloud over a landscape. But Samuel supported himself with visions of the great fortune he would make; and in his more exalted moods he burst out into peals of laughter, enlivening his mind with the retrospect of Sally's long years of despotism and economy; and at the end of all there was he, the despised

Samuel, figured as the fortune-maker of the family, like a statue at the end of an avenue.

For all that, it was with something of a sinking heart that Samuel hurried down-stairs to Daniel on the great closing day of the negotiation. The cheque for three thousand pounds, payable to the order of Daniel Ruddock, Esq., was carefully buttoned up in his breast-pocket; he having written it secretly in his bedroom, with trembling fingers. Somehow, just now a sense of insecurity stole into his heart, and he would have withdrawn if he could. But it was too late.

'It is done now, Daniel!'

As he passed the cheque over the table he said this like a man who has committed himself irrevocably.

'Yes, Samuel,' Daniel replied, with a scarcely hidden sneer, 'it is done now, and can't be undone. Remember this'—he pointed to the packet of Samuel's silly letters—'it has been your doing, not mine!'

'Yes, it has been my doing,' Samuel faintly answered. His heart seemed to turn to lead in his breast. Daniel's face was killing. From that moment poor Samuel knew he was a ruined man.

Daniel Badger walked home master of the position. Now at any moment he could coerce Samuel Badger, drive Hector from his door; and even the awful battery of Sally Badger's tongue could not open fire upon him. He smiled, and chatted to himself as gaily as if he had been walking with a facetious friend, and his shoulders touched his ears, as he hugged himself for his cleverness.

'O, my fine fellow!'—this was Hector—'I have you in my clutches now! I can insult you.

I can call you every name I please. I can lash your calf's hide through and through. And you dare not complain. I can say to you, shaking my fist in your flat face, "Repeat one word, make one complaint to any living creature, and I will press your father to ruin! That is, I will hold him to a ruinous bargain which he urged me to make! But if you let me stamp upon you, and crush you, and vilify you as man never before was stamped on and crushed and vilified by man, why, then I may consider your father's folly, and allow him his money back—in part, at least, in part!"'

For, in his heart of hearts, Daniel feared the scandal that would arise in Middleborough if the story of the purchase were told. But as a whip for Hector, as a gag for Sally, nay, as a means of getting for himself the reputation of a generous dealer, who would not hold a poor man to a disadvantageous bargain, this three thousand pounds was a god-send to Daniel.

While the cheque was still uncashed, Fate gave him both opportunity and motive for insulting Hector. When he arrived at home, Beatrice met him, and her handsome brow was unusually contracted.

'Daniel,' she said, 'I am furious.'

'Furious!' exclaimed Daniel; 'with whom?'

'With Lucy.'

'What has Lucy been doing?' Daniel asked, his own eye kindling. 'Has she been with—'

'I called with her at Sir John's. Bob was in. Everything fell out as I could have wished. But Lucy was so rude to Bob, so satirical, so ill-natured, that the poor fellow quite felt it, I am sure. As for Sir John—well, you know how gentlemanly he is;

but he seemed hardly able to contain himself.'

In justice to Lucy, it ought to be said that her mother, who was heartily vexed, greatly over-coloured her narrative.

'That is not all,' Beatrice continued; 'the most provoking thing was that just as we were entering Sir John's door, who should pass but Hector! I saw Lucy and himself exchange looks. Daniel!' Beatrice exclaimed, in irresistible impatience and anger, 'it was the sight of *him* that made her so rude to Bob! I saw the look he gave! O, I am irritated beyond all bearing!'

Now just when Beatrice uttered this word who should pass in front of the house but unlucky Hector Badger! Even at this supreme moment, had the young man but turned his head the other way he might have passed unobserved; but he was a lover, and he cast one shy glance up at the window. Beatrice recognised the face, and her wrath boiled over.

'See!' she exclaimed. 'There the fellow goes again! O Daniel, give it to him now!'

Daniel heard no more. As fast as his by no means nimble feet would carry him he made his way to the front-door, and out upon the road, forgetting his hat in his fury.

Hector was a swift walker, and had already got some distance ahead; so Daniel, panting and puffing, had to run along the road, a rare figure, but happily the spot was unfrequented. At last Daniel got, as he hoped, within hearing, and stopped.

'Ass! ass! ass!' he roared in frantic rage.

It might as well have been the most dulcet and complimentary substantive, for Hector heard nothing and walked serenely on.

Daniel, to make up for the ground thus lost, had to run several paces more.

'Booby! booby! booby!' he roared, hoping, by a change in the epithet, to catch Hector's ear. But this, too, was in vain, for unconsciously and more rapidly Hector held on his way.

Daniel had to make a third race for it, and he was almost exhausted when he stopped the last time.

'Jackass! jackass! jack—ass!' he shouted.

The splitting of the substantive did the work, and Hector, catching a sound, though not the true one, pulled up and turned round. Seeing Daniel Ruddock without his hat, ejaculating and gesticulating in the middle of the road, he came to the only conclusion that was possible. He thought some terrible catastrophe had occurred, and ran back.

'Mr. Ruddock! Mr. Ruddock! has anything happened? Is the house on fire?'

It was an unfortunate question. Daniel at once concluded that Hector was laughing at him, and if his madness of anger could grow hotter, it did so.

'Sneak! scamp! peeper!' he cried, taking breath for each epithet as he discharged it at the astounded Hector. 'O you great ugly goose! you shambling stuttering beetlehead!'

'Mr. Ruddock!' Hector exclaimed.

What fine actors are we all in those junctures of life when we are profoundly moved! Astonishment could not have been expressed in face and voice, not by the most accomplished player, as Hector presented it now.

'Mr. Ruddock!' roared Daniel. 'How dare you Mr. Ruddock me? Miss Ruddock, you mean. It is Miss Ruddock you are looking

after. O, what a fine chance for a man's daughter! a great addle-headed tomfool! What a pretty son-in-law to stick his legs under a man's table, a lumpy looby like you!

Hector saw the whole tragedy at a glance. He had been discovered. Appearances indicated that there would be, as Hector mentally prophesied, 'a most awful row.' And so this poor studious lad, unversed in life, and sorely troubled in conscience, was unable to make any reply to Daniel. He stood the image of fear and guilt, reddening under Daniel's coarse volleys of abuse, and showing such obvious trepidation that the bully was encouraged to storm on more fiercely.

'You have the impudence to think of my daughter, you penniless upstart! Why, your father is called the biggest fool in the town! and your mother never wears a decent gown! Marry my daughter, indeed!'

At this last sally a change passed over Hector's face, which Daniel did not the least notice; and, as Hector still made no answer, Daniel grew fairly transported with fury, and rushed rapidly on to the sequel of the incident.

'Ever since I knew you I called you dolt and blockhead,' he continued; 'and now you stand staring at me as if your tongue was tied. I tell you, never come to my house again, never cross my door, never look at my daughter, you great saucer-eyed noodle! Promise me!'

Hector said not a word.

'Promise me!' Daniel cried, mad with fury.

Hector still kept silence.

'Promise me!' Daniel's harsh cracked voice rose to a shriek; and, with his bare head and outstretched hands, he was a picture

indeed. No; even the third time Hector would not answer.

'O, you won't, won't you!' Daniel cried, in the same frenzied alto. 'Then take that—and take that—and take *that*, you flat-faced fool!'

These words were accompanied by two vicious and pretty severe blows right upon Hector's face; and, though Daniel was feeble with passion, and, besides, so diminutive that he had almost to leap in the air to deliver the stroke, the blows made Hector's face, even its redness, throw out a deeper red, and one which promised to be pretty permanent.

Worms will turn at last, and Hector had borne enough. With sudden fear Daniel saw the young man's face grow, not only red, but furious too. Hector rushed at him, and, before Daniel could utter a word, his son-in-law nonelect was holding him in the air with what seemed the grasp of a giant.

At the side of the road there was a low wall, some four or five feet high, and beyond this wall, washing its foundations, a dirty brook lazily wound its way through the field. In a moment Daniel found that Hector had perched him on the top of this wall, and, shaking him smartly all the time, was signifying that the next proceeding would be to tumble him over into the muddy ditch.

'There!' Hector said, gasping with passion. 'I won't call you names, for I leave that to men of your own stamp. And I won't strike you, because you are old and feeble, and because—'

He was going to say, '*Because you are Lucy's father.*'

This, however, he had sense to suppress, and he went on:

'But if you don't'—shake—'tell me you are'—shake—'sorry

for what you have said'—shake —'I'll roll you over into the ditch.'

Here followed three shakes, so sharp that Daniel's teeth knocked against each other.

'Hector!' Daniel said, scarcely believing that this blustering young giant could be Hector Badger, 'Hector! let me down, sir!—this instant, sir!'

'If another syllable passes your lips before you say "I am sorry,"' roared Hector, with blazing eyes and quivering frame, 'one single syllable, I'll roll you into the ditch.'

Daniel was going to cry, 'This instant, sir!' once more, but as he made his mouth for the word he felt Hector preparing to shoot him down. Matters were serious, and Daniel knew it; so he said nothing, but sat shaking and being shaken on the top of the wall.

'Say you are sorry,' Hector cried again. 'Quick! or in you go. Once! twice! thr—!'

'I am sorry,' Daniel called out in great haste, for he felt himself going.

'Then get down,' Hector cried scornfully; and whisking him off the wall, the young man turned away and walked off, as if Daniel deserved no further notice.

He left Daniel standing bare-headed and transfixed in the middle of the road. The old rascal's fury was effectually cooled; and, without knowing it, he was exploring a district of human nature of which he knew little. Reader, you who love to know your species, ponder what I tell you. Hector Badger had not lessened his chance of Lucy's hand by this humiliation of her father, our worthy Daniel Ruddock.

CHAPTER LXIII.

CROSS JUDGMENTS ON HECTOR BADGER.

To a part of this story, which ought to be written in delicate detail, a few words only must be given. Time and space are nearly exhausted, and the conduct of Mildred Walsingham at this critical juncture—which in justice to her ought to be told in a separate novelette—must, to her detriment, be narrated in sentences, not chapters.

Conscious that she was an heiress, and so a species of princess; led, moreover, to believe by Violet that Sholto, on account of her great fortune, would never make an advance to her; and knowing nothing of the interview between Sholto and Violet, which the sick girl carefully concealed, Mildred did actually in the most becoming way signify to Sholto that he was not altogether indifferent to her. Her behaviour was free from the faintest indelicacy; but Sholto, full of other thoughts, treated her with palpable neglect. Proud Mildred was incensed. Eugene Ruddock, who never lost an opportunity, and who in fact was continually making opportunities, crept a little nearer to his Golden Girl at this time. Do not, dear ladies, find fault with Mildred because, in your eyes, Eugene may be contemptible. Remember he was a specious fellow, good-looking, accomplished, and agreeable, while Mildred had not the advantage which you enjoy of studying his character by the help of the story-teller. However she be judged, the fact remains. Mildred was affronted by Sholto's behaviour; and Eugene, who never affronted anybody, seemed almost desirable by contrast with the neglectful, unconscious, and somewhat rough Dr. Alexander.

There is a famous history (which has existed for many generations, and has been attentively studied by several million of young students) which sets forth how, as an aged lady was driving a pig home one evening, she came to a stile. The pig raised a difficulty about getting over, and the old lady, failing to make the animal see reason, invoked the assistance of the animate and inanimate universe in various detachments. But the dog would not bite the pig, the stick would not beat the dog, the fire would not burn the stick, the water would not quench the fire, so that the old lady declared, with much plausibility, that she could not get home that night. Suddenly one agent began to work, and all the rest followed, like links in a chain. Water, fire, stick, dog, and pig each acted its part; and the narrative closes with an agreeably suggested picture of the old lady and the pig at one mind, going up the cottage-garden punctually at the hour of tea-time.

In a similar manner this novel has taken a sudden turn which will rapidly lead to its conclusion. Here are a number of people wanting to marry, or wanted to marry. They are widely separated by age, station, and intention; but the attentive reader will find that a solitary event set them all in motion; and that event was the insane purchase of those Tickenham fields, into which wily Daniel Ruddock led silly Samuel Badger. For if Samuel and Sally had not been in Daniel's power, Daniel would not have burst upon Hector with this explosion of fury. Having so exploded, and having been ignominiously punished by Hector, Daniel returned home raging, without his hat, and carrying a most visible memorandum of

the wall upon his coat-tails. Beatrice inquired what had happened. Concealment was scarcely possible, even had Daniel desired it; and in a few snarling sentences he described the indignity he had been forced to endure. Beatrice Ruddock was a politic woman, but she could be angry upon occasion; and upon hearing the story she became as furious as her husband. But though on malice she was bent, Beatrice had a prudent mind; and before she settled to have a downright quarrel with the Badgers, she asked herself how a rupture would affect Eugene's rising hopes of Mildred. She decided that a quarrel would rather further Eugene's ends; for the case being so gross, Beatrice judged that Mildred would probably declare against the Badgers. Then the game would be in Eugene's hands indeed. Reasoning in this way, and full of genuine resentment upon her husband's account, Beatrice walked over to Sally Badger.

Sally received her with that aspect of armed truce which was usual in their interviews; but Beatrice treated Sally with open asperity. This behaviour Sally could not at first understand, for quiet Hector had said nothing about his morning's exploit. When Beatrice Ruddock, who had a severe kind of elocution when she chose, said in a stern voice, 'As for your son setting my husband on a wall, it is the most outrageous thing I ever heard of,' Sally was perfectly bewildered. She rapidly conned the probabilities of the case in this fashion: first, that her ears had deceived her; second, that Beatrice had gone out of her senses; third, that she—Sally—was herself mad, and the victim of an auricular hallucination.

'Set Daniel up on a wall!' cried

Sally, hovering between these trying suppositions. 'On a wall, Beatrice?'

'Then you have heard nothing,' Mrs. Ruddock said. 'Your son dared not tell you.'

So Mrs. Ruddock described what had happened, not, however, mentioning Lucy. Sally listened with growing relief as the madhouse hypothesis began to recede; and she quickly perceived that Mrs. Ruddock was leaving blank spaces in her story, which spaces the shrewd Sally filled up with love and Lucy, and so she gradually saw the truth of the affair. And now, having the picture full and clear before her mind's eye, and being incensed by Mrs. Ruddock's high and mighty air, Sally threw herself back in her chair, and burst out into a peal of laughter.

'It is wrong of me,' she admitted, with an exasperating appearance of enjoyment; 'but really, Beatrice, when I think of Daniel stuck—stuck on the top of that wall, and of Hector lifting him, and of the kicking and scuffling there must have been, I cannot help laughing, not for anything you could give me!'

'It was insolent intolerable treatment!' Beatrice exclaimed. 'Vulgar, brutal, ruffianly!'

'It is not like Hector,' Sally said reflectively. 'I wonder he dared.'

'I could not have believed he would have showed such impudence,' said Daniel Ruddock's wife.

'I could not have believed he would have shown such pluck,' said Hector Badger's mother.

'Pluck, Sally!' cried Beatrice. 'I say impudence!'

'Impudence, Beatrice!' retorted Sally. 'I say pluck!'

'Since you treat the matter so,' cried Beatrice, now furious, 'I

shall ask Daniel to prosecute your son for assault.'

'If you do,' replied Sally Badger the fearless, 'both sides will have to be heard. Perhaps your husband's story will not seem so fine when Hector's is told.'

'My husband has a character,' Beatrice said proudly.

'He *had* a character,' Sally retorted scornfully, 'when you married him, Beatrice, and a very bad character it was. I remember another story of his being assaulted,' continued Sally, with flashing eyes. 'You were told of it before you married him. How he went, with one of his wretched bailiffs, to a poor man's house, and stripped the room in which the wife was lying on her death-bed, and how the husband took Daniel by the nape of the neck and kicked him down-stairs into the street. Character indeed! Daniel's character! A character he has been trying to run away from ever since he married you!'

Beatrice Ruddock had a certain sense of dignity, and she did not choose to expose herself to any such sarcasms as these, for she well knew that her husband was a good target for scorn. She haughtily withdrew; and Sally bade her good-bye, preserving her defiant posture to the last.

But however Beatrice might compose her outward demeanour, there was a whirlwind in her breast, and when she encountered Major Sanctuary, a few paces from Sally's door, she told him the whole story with every accentuation of malice which her excitement suggested. The Major, who had for some time suspected that Eugene was looking after Mildred, listened with ill-concealed satisfaction. His prognostication of the effect of this quarrel upon Mildred was different from that of Beatrice, for he surmised that a

rupture with the Badgers would surely strain the relations between the Ruddocks and the Golden Girls. Here he saw his own advantage; but it was no part of his game to smooth the ruffled lady before him.

'Gross conduct, ma'am; could not be grosser! Set your husband on the top of a wall, eh? Daniel Ruddock, Esq., J.P.! A high wall! Now, was it six feet high? seven feet high? Have you any figures, ma'am?'

'It was high enough to be most awkward,' Beatrice said sulkily.

'And it *was* a wall!' rejoined the Major. 'That is the grand point, which cannot be upset. It *was* a wall. Fancy a borough magistrate set up on a wall, just like—just like—' the Major stammered, not being strong in similes. Then a bright thought struck him. 'Of course, ma'am, I remember now. It is exactly like Humpty Dumpty!'

This ingenious comparison by no means soothed Beatrice, who went her way not at all relieved by her confidential outburst, while the Major hurried home as fast as his legs would carry him. He was dying of fear lest any one should tell this magnificent story to Mrs. Marmaduke before he arrived.

To a pictorial imagination like the Major's, the incident was most suggestive. He appalled Mrs. Marmaduke by a narrative of a fistic contest, which might have taken place in the prize-ring; and he described the damage done to Hector's face as minutely as if he had sponged the place himself. The incident of the wall he reserved for climax, and prepared for it with such rhetorical skill, that Mrs. Marmaduke fully expected to hear that Daniel had tumbled over and broken both legs and arms. Indeed, the

Major was most reluctant to admit that Mr. Ruddock went home uninjured.

'He was not hurt, then?' Mrs. Marmaduke said, when at last this fact had been elucidated. 'No real injury was done!'

'No *external* injury, ma'am,' the Major said, with great emphasis, 'beyond that we must not go.'

'But I tell you what,' the Major cried, after a short pause. 'Now is the day! now is the hour! Give one of your snug little dinners. Ask those Ruddocks. Plaster the father's sore skin! Let the son meet my daughter, and I pledge you my word the thing is done!'

'Major,' Mrs. Marmaduke replied gravely, 'on that point we must have some serious conversation.'

CHAPTER LXIV.

IN WHICH MAJOR SANCTUARY DROPS HIS MASK.

So the serious conversation began.

'Major,' said Mrs. Marmaduke—'my dear friend, let me say'—she interposed this clause with unusual softness in her voice—'I am going to speak to you with the greatest freedom.'

The Major started in his chair.

'My dear ma'am,' he said, 'I am delighted to hear it. There is nothing pleases me so much as when an old friend like yourself speaks to me with the greatest freedom.'

In spite of this handsome speech, the Major looked unlike a man who anticipates an enjoyment. He reddened, he stammered, he shifted in his chair; for the Major suspected what was coming.

'I have a great affection for

your daughter Victoria,' said the old lady, opening with a formality which instantly thawed into affection; 'and—dear girl!—she is really fond of me.'

'To me, ma'am,' the Major remarked, looking exquisitely uneasy, 'nothing could possibly be more pleasing.'

'Of course she confides in me,' Mrs. Marmaduke continued. 'She tells me all about her feelings, and her hopes, and the state of her affections.'

'My acquaintance with your charming sex,' the Major said, with gallantry, 'is not so extensive or so intimate as it might have been. Left a widower so long, I have not had those opportunities of extending my feminine acquaintance which fall to the lot of married men. Still, ma'am, I think I know enough to be pretty sure that women who are friends do confide to each other a good deal about their feelings and their hopes, and especially about the state of their affections.'

'Now, my friend,' Mrs. Marmaduke said, continuing her discourse without regard to this last remark, which was delivered with an air of jocosity under difficulties, 'Victoria simply detests Eugene Ruddock.'

'Now, ma'am—now, my dear friend,' the Major answered, raising his hand, as it were, to wave the supposition off, 'consider what language you are using. "Detests" is strong—"detests" is very strong; in fact, ma'am,' the Major continued, in a positive, comparative, and superlative sort of way, '"detests" is almost the strongest word in the language.'

'Victoria simply detests Eugene Ruddock,' Mrs. Marmaduke repeated, with the utmost inflexibility; 'and so do I.'

'Then, ma'am, you have been

agreeing together, I suppose,' the Major remarked, with irritation—'encouraging each other.'

'Eugene Ruddock,' said Mrs. Marmaduke, with a curl of her handsome lip, 'is as paltry in mind as he is finical in body. Vain, selfish, not vigorous enough for vice—'

'Now, ma'am,' the Major cried, raising his hand again; 'now, ma'am—'

'Not vigorous enough for vice,' repeated Mrs. Marmaduke, with a stately scorn of her friend's prudery. 'And underneath his fine surface he is vulgar—wretchedly vulgar.'

'The very expression Victoria used to me this morning!' exclaimed the Major. 'Why, ma'am, you have been putting words into the girl's mouth!'

'I honour Victoria,' said Mrs. Marmaduke, 'because she will not sell herself for a carriage and horses and a fine house and two or three thousand a year. She says she would rather go out as a governess, dear girl!'

'My dear ma'am,' the Major answered, 'do please remember Victoria has nothing to offer a husband.'

'Nothing to offer a husband!' Mrs. Marmaduke repeated, catching the Major up before he could add another word. 'I thought offerings came from the husband's side. Nothing to offer! Has she not an ancient name?'

Before he knew it, the Major was betrayed into a nod at this, for he was proud of his family.

'Has she not a character softened and refined by high lineage and honourable blood?'

The argument was going dead against him; but, for his life, the Major could not help nodding again.

'Has she not, what is better still,' the old lady went on—and

her magnificent voice grew rich with feeling—'a pure girl's heart, a woman's life, a nature unspotted from the world? her hope, her future? all she is, and all she shall be? Believe me, Major, if Victoria says the price of all that is above rubies, I honour her for having the courage to say so. If she says she will never sell herself, but that she will give herself and all she is to the man of her heart, and to him only, then I, for one, cry, with all my soul, God bless the girl!'

'My dear ma'am,' the Major said, with symptoms of alarm, 'all this, you know, is the sort of talk that ought to be delivered from the pulpit, where one is not expected to reply. Talked of on a sofa, in a drawing-room conversation, sentiments of this kind are unmanageable. Where are we, ma'am—where shall we be—if this sort of thing gets a footing in our drawing-rooms!'

'Major, Major,' Mrs. Marmaduke continued, with deepening gravity and pathos, 'nineteen years ago you took this girl to be baptised, and then you used the most solemn words a parent can, and asked and vowed that she might be kept from the snares of the world, the flesh, and the devil. Now that God has spared her to you all these years, and when her nature is just unfolding into womanhood, will you hold her up and sell her to the world, and perhaps to the devil, for a few thousand pounds?'

'Now, my dear ma'am,' the Major said, growing more restive at every sentence the old lady uttered, 'this, you know, is simply pulpit language. It is utterly unfit for the drawing-room. In church, ma'am, it would be very suitable; but, ma'am, the pulpit in the drawing-room, even when occupied by an elegant preacher

like yourself'—here the Major failed signally in an attempt to be jocular—'is, in fact, ma'am, a most puzzling and irritating innovation.'

'Major, Major,' the old lady replied, 'it is not the pulpit, but the truth, that is troublesome.'

And the Major made no reply.

'Now,' Mrs. Marmaduke continued, with, for the first time, something of a satiric dryness in her tone, 'you are a man of large fortune. Why not see your daughter happy in your own lifetime? Why not make her an allowance? Why not let her and her cousin be happy together? They can never come to want with your ample means.'

'I object to cousins marrying,' the Major said doggedly.

'Second cousins,' was Mrs. Marmaduke's dry comment.

'Besides, ma'am, I do not choose to clip my income at my time of life, or to cut down my luxuries.'

'At your time of life,' replied Mrs. Marmaduke, 'the greatest luxury of all will be to see your daughter happily and honourably married. Don't tie her to a man she hates and despises, and so put her for life in that most awful position for a feeling woman where she is constantly tempted to hate her marriage vow. We know what follows—and that not always with the worst of us. Divide your superfluous income—divide your superfluous income, I say; but never sell your daughter!'

All this time Major Sanctuary had been fidgeting in his chair, muttering to himself, turning red and white, and giving many outward signs of mental disturbance. He did not speak, but looked his friend in the face with something of the air of a dumb being, struggling with emotion which can find no outlet.

'Divide your superfluous income,

Major!' Mrs. Marmaduke repeated her words with an almost imperceptible smile on her lip. 'Lop off your luxuries. Never sell your daughter!'

'My friend! My dear ma'am! My old friend!' the Major called out, breaking into confession all at once; 'I am a hypocrite, an impostor, a humbug, a most miserable sham! I am not a rich man; I am poor—wretchedly poor. Cards, clubs, cabs, horses! Why, it has all been lies, ma'am, every word of it! I live in two paltry attic rooms near Lincoln's Inn. I never get into a cab, and very seldom into a 'bus. I stint myself in food. I have not bought a bottle of wine these ten years. Why, Victoria's education and board and dress have swallowed up three parts of my income. If I had lived like a gentleman, she, poor girl, could never have been brought up like a lady. Either of us must pinch, and I thought I could manage better than she. I know I am a selfish man—God forgive me!—and you know it; but Victoria has been my idol, and everything I could give up I have given for her these many years. And after it all I have nothing to leave her when I die, and I cannot bear to think of her starving, or living on others. Divide my income! I have none to divide! Lop off my luxuries! I did that fifteen years ago—luxuries, comforts, yea, and absolute necessities too. Why, I am in debt now, and God only knows how I am to pay. I am an unreal miserable old man. I deceived you forty years ago, and my sin has found me out. I am stricken and heart-broken!—stricken and heart-broken.'

Undoubtedly the Major's strength and spirits had abated of late. It was unlike him to give way so utterly; quite unlike

him to cover his face and try to hide the anguish with which his whole frame was quivering. He had never yet penetrated the noble nature of his friend.

Sobbing herself, with tears running freely down her venerable cheeks, the old lady knelt beside him and laid his shaking head against her breast, comforting him as if he had been a child.

'There, Harry, there!' Since girlhood she had never called him by this name. 'Cry, dear, cry; it will do you good!'

So the two silver heads met; she bending over him whispering consolation, and he still overwhelmed with the outburst of shame and grief that had been pent up so long.

'Let me go now,' the Major said at last, trying to disengage himself. 'I cannot be what I was once, or this would never have happened. Let me go!'

'If you are in debt—if Victoria is dependent on you—if you have little means or none—where will you go? What can you do?'

For answer the Major shook his head despondingly.

'Harry,' the old lady said, 'I have been living in the past lately. Old days and old scenes have been floating before my brain like pictures; bits of landscape, faces, houses, rooms—all have been coming and going like fragments of a vivid dream. And amidst the succession of memories one particular scene has come and gone and come again, until the whole of it is restored, just like a faded painting. We were at a little evening-party together—I remember it so well!—the supper was scanty, and there were hardly lights enough in the drawing-room to see each other. It was summer and the windows were open—dear, dear, how the whole is before me!—the dusky

air, and the dim forms and faces ! Some one sat down to the piano and sang "Annie Laurie." I hear the song just as it floated through the room :

"And for bonnie Annie Laurie
I'd lay me down and dee."

Harry, our hearts were full of youth and affection ; and I remember how our eyes met, and each of us knew that the other was taking up the words of the song and singing them in the language of love. Do you remember ?

Major Sanctuary signified by a dejected shake of his head that he remembered it well.

"You walked home with me that night, and you told me you loved me ; and we promised that whatever else might befall us our hearts should never be divided. How young we were ! How little we knew !"

The old lady stopped. She could barely control her voice, and her eyes were brimming over with tears, but by a great effort she maintained her outward composure.

"You did not know me," the Major said, raising his head and fixing his eyes upon her, with a serious expression such as she had never seen in his face before. "I was not what I seemed. I loved the world, not you, all the time. I loved ease, and comfort, and companions, and society. I could not face poverty. I see myself now, and despise myself ; but it is too late—forty years too late !"

"I enjoy thinking of the old days," Mrs. Marmaduke murmured, with a smile sparkling in her tears. "Recollection used to be like a scald, but it is pleasant now."

"Yes, I could not face poverty," the Major repeated, pursuing his thought in the same dejected way. "And now it is too late—forty years too late !"

"Those were happy, happy days," murmured the old lady, pursuing her thought. "O, they were golden days !"

"Let me go now," the Major said, rising. "I must leave you to-morrow. I cannot thank you as I ought for your kindness to Victoria and myself. But it shall be remembered—it shall be remembered while I live, and my dear girl will never forget you."

He stood up, the image of a broken man. Of all his airs and his swagger and his loquacity, not a trace was left. Gray, tremulous, with pale cheeks and downcast eyes, he could hardly have been identified with the Major Sanctuary of the Quidnuncs Club, who stepped into this history with so elastic a tread.

"Where will you go ?" Mrs. Marmaduke asked, drying her eyes. "Where will your home be ?"

"That," he answered in a scarcely audible voice, "I can hardly say. We must see."

She laid her hand on his.

"Sit down," she said. "Let us talk for five minutes more."

Five minutes—ten minutes—twenty minutes they must have talked, and not finished then ; for, nearly half an hour later, as Victoria was sitting in the library by herself, she was surprised to see the door fly open, and so remain, nothing immediately following the event. Her surprise became amazement when she saw her father enter the room in a most excited and fantastic style, skipping and leading his hostess by the hand. The old lady was rosy and somewhat flustered ; but she managed, without dancing herself, to accommodate her motions to the Major's eccentric evolutions. The whole apparition was so unusual, and was, by a peculiar expression on Mrs. Marmaduke's

face, so plainly declared not to be mere burlesque, that Victoria, standing up, could only ejaculate, 'Papa!'

For then, marking his face more closely, she saw that he was laughing and crying together, and said no more.

'See here, Victoria!' the Major cried, stopping before her, with the old lady's hand still clasped in his. 'I have to present a lady to you. A lady you have never known; nor I, as I live! nor I, till this minute. Congratulate your mother, Victoria; congratulate your future mother!'

The girl turned white and red at the same instant: the sweetest white and sweetest red, the tints of youth and innocence. Then, with a charming readiness and grace, she advanced to Mrs. Marmaduke, holding out both hands.

'This is news, indeed!' she said. 'Unexpected—delightful news to me! I am to be congratulated, not you.'

'She wants to make you happy,' the impetuous Major cried. 'She is determined that you are to marry the lad you love!'

Victoria never heard a word of this. Thinking that she had gone through the formal part of the ceremony, she now let her feelings guide her, and laid her cheek against the old lady's breast in the most artless and caressing way.

'It makes me so happy,' she sighed, 'so very happy, my dear, dear own mamma!'

It was a picture to see the girl, bound by no tie of blood, affiliating herself by the finer thread of sympathy and gratitude with the old lady she had loved so long. Mrs. Marmaduke had often

dreamed of a daughter of her own blood; and she felt that a daughter was given to her now of closer affinity than even descent can impart. It was hard for her, as she stroked Victoria's fair young head, to express her feelings; but she struggled valiantly and did not break down.

And so the two stood, embracing each other, as happy at that moment as ever passion or ambition made human hearts, and with happiness which could bring no after sorrow. And the Major looked on with something of the spruce vivacity of the great Major Sanctuary of the Quidnuncs Club.

'It is a most extraordinary circumstance,' he cried. 'It is the most extraordinary circumstance that ever occurred in a life full of most extraordinary circumstances. Talk of your Arabian Nights! A story like this beats 'em all hollow! A thousand and one nights! This ought to be related on night one thousand and two!'

But while he thus tried to rattle on in his old style his true feelings became too strong for him. Major Sanctuary of the Quidnuncs Club again faded out, and there emerged the reality of a gray trembling old man, who spoke brokenly:

'Victoria, my dearest girl, all your perplexities are over. Don't thank me, don't thank me! Thank your mother—the best woman that ever drew breath!'

Then he made a long pause. Recollections of the past seemed to come over him. His excited gaiety died down, and he said solemnly to his daughter,

'How good she is you will never know. I dare not tell you, and she herself never will!'

(To be continued.)

A MIDLAND MOORLAND.

Just as the Holyhead-bound railway traveller is leaving the Trent Valley, and for the last time has crossed the sluggish waters of the upper river, there appears southwards, through the carriage windows, a miniature chain of hills, fern-covered and open for the most part, but occasionally bearing patches of beech and pine. The little hills are the northern boundary of a great coal-field. Cross the river by the weather-beaten trestle-bridge and climb up through the fern; lying below to the south is a moorland panorama—miles of breezy, heather-clad downs stretching out in the sunshine till their identity is lost in the hazy English distance. Tints varying from deep purple to silver-green, with eccentric patches of golden brown and fawn colour, predominate on the slopes; the crests are here and there dotted with tall black-plumed cedars. Nearer at hand are sombre groves of bronze-green pine and park-like enclosures with shady beeches; almost everywhere the graceful silver birch is airing its feathery leaves in the breeze. There are no habitations, no ploughed fields, no green hedgerows; it is a 'beautiful desert' of intermingled cedar, birch, heather, and bracken. Only certain threads of sullen vapour, drawn as with a painter's pencil across the southern horizon, suggest the dominion of utilitarian man.

But we must approach the ancient hunting kingdom of Cannock Chase by its entrance-gates, some miles further north-west, nearer to the old county town of

Stafford, low-lying in rich river deposit of the Sowe Valley. It is at this end that we may look for the chief beauties of the Chase—the breezy wildness, the rich colouring, and pleasing variety of scene which distinguish this Midland moorland from others of its class. Once fairly amongst the heather, the eye is charmed in one direction by wooded slopes and intervening glimpses of the rich fertile lands of Staffordshire and Derbyshire to the north-east, and in another by long ranges of variously-tinted moorland, unbroken except by sparsely-dotted oak and cedar. A multitude of little water-worn hills occupy the foreground, and a broad, winding, gravelly road bends amongst them on its way to the Trent Valley and distant London. The smaller and nearer hills have more definite outlines, and are verdant with fine wiry mountain grass and silvery ling; the more distant are bronzed and heather-covered, and the nearer southward they stretch the longer and rougher they grow, finally merging themselves into the wild moorlands filling up the south-east corner of the county, and where the collieries and mining villages are thick and abundant. The little gracefully-rounded hills are characteristic of the Chase; they have each their tuft of wild stark cedars, with shelving foliage, standing clear and distinct against the sky. As we climb them, the surrounding woodland, where every variety of conifera, from the deepest pine to the delicate-tufted larch, mingles with oak, elm, and feathery beech,

opens to show stretches of glimmering water. The short slippery hill grass is almost hidden in deep rich moss and ling; minute springs trickle from gravelly hollows in the side, and join their waters in the plashing little rivulet running round the base. On the summit of one of the tallest we may rest under the boughs of the old copper-stemmed cedar, and inhale the fragrance borne from the neighbouring pine woods. In the valley looking towards the west crawls the little oozy river Sowe, with ill-defined boundaries, and exhibiting a curious tendency to intrude into the rich pastures alongside; the valley was once a marshy lake, but not too unsuited for timid prehistoric man, whose bones lie hidden in the peat. *Ci-gît* likewise those of the primeval ox and deer. Rising like a tumulus of vapour on the western horizon is the Wrekin, dear to the sight of our Shropshire friends, and, still fainter to discern, the rugged Silurian chain that hints of the proximity of the Welsh marches. Our eastern background is the wide-stretching moorland, preluded by certain cool green valleys of oak and birch. In early summer waving green fern and unblossomed heather combine to deceive our eyes with a view of distant pastures; later summer intersperses delicate pinkish tints with the fawn and pale green of the slopes; but it remains for autumn, that 'season of mists and mellow fruitfulness,' to take up the brush and paint them with all the gorgeous purple bloom of the fully-blossomed heather. Nor do the seasons of winter and early spring, gloomy in other surroundings, lack colour and variety on the Chase; for the dying and dead bracken and the ever-fresh mountain grass unite in chequering the hillsides with green and russet

browns. At all times of the year this little Midland moorland is full of colour and variety, and it is doubtful whether the one or two brilliant days vouchsafed us in December and January do not find the Chase in one of its most charming garbs. Through the diaphanous mists of a hot August day, however, the distances recede into a fairy veil—the hills and sharply-limbed cedars, the hanging woods and silver birch colonies, form a mirage scene.

The Chase is the first high land with which the even plain of central Staffordshire is broken on the eastern side. The hillocks—for they are but miniature copies of the larger order of earthy piles—are sufficiently elevated to spread out, like a semicircle, a charming view of the flat green pasture country below. The popular view of Staffordshire, as a tract of country quite handed over to the dominion of Vulcan, and possessed of a soil impregnated with coal and gritty slag, is quickly dispersed. The home of grimy industry, the locality of the colliery and circum-devastating blast-furnace, is not in the range of our present view. Instead, we have miles of lovely wooded plain, golden cornfields, and open country. Where, then, do the vast industries of the iron country lie? Did the Chase hills stand as high as their distant neighbour the Wrekin, we should trace northwards (beyond the long woody ridge which limits a more distant view) one of these grimy seats of toil—the sullen Potteries. In the midst of many square miles of this cinder-strewn country dwell hundreds of thousands of workers at the oppressive glaze oven or in colliery and mine. But the proper, veritable 'Black Country' is far to the south, and fertile Worcestershire may claim

a share in the prosperous district, where the flaring blast-furnaces light up the night as with beacons, and mighty ramparts of vitreous slag and waste 'coal-bat' oppress the existence of vegetable life. But as yet the breezy picturesque section of Staffordshire which we have entered upon presents no such gloomy features as these. The air is fresh and sweet on the hill-tops, down in the quiet little valleys the outlines of dark green and purple hillside stand sharply against the warm blue sky, and the many swift little water-courses trickle along with an occasional merry splash.

'Here the gentle lark, weary of rest,
From his moist cabinet mounts up on
high,
And wakes the morning, from whose
silver breast
The sun ariseth in his majesty;
Who doth the world so gloriously behold,
That cedar-tops and hills seem bur-
nished gold.'

There is a rustle amongst the fern, and a dozen small brown rabbits 'skelter' towards their homes in the sandbanks. An intermittent 'ticking' is kept up by scores of lively grasshoppers amongst the heather, and the scrubby whin-bush or 'bilberry' shrub is all astir with insect life. This same bilberry shrub finds a successful domicile on the Chase. The bright little evergreen with rich purple berries creeps in all directions amongst the taller heath, but the feathered game find out its fruit, and reap a plentiful harvest. Few representatives of the snaky tribes are existent on the Chase, but sometimes the common snake (*natrix torquator*) and rarely the viper can be met with. The *fauna* are mainly of the furry races—the prolific rabbit and gay brown hare. In the woods the squirrel jumps amongst his favourite branches, and timid herds of the common deer browse on the swards. The

territorial owners of the Chase in past days were mighty hunters, and many of their modern representatives so far keep up the traditions of their ancestors as to cherish and protect the sources of sport. The large game-parks of the Chase, preserved by the Paget, Anson, and Wolsley families, are amongst the most picturesque spots in the district. We may walk through one yonder, formed on the broad slope of the Chase, and stretching down almost to the narrow waters of the Trent. Peep into the keeper's garden, and see the many trophies of prowess nailed on the walls—dread omens for the hawk, kite, weasel, and other members of the rapacious dwellers in the woods. Further on we may stop under the group of flowering limes, listen to the continuous hum of the bees at work high up in the fragrant foliage, and note the graceful succession of trout-pools ascending to the higher lands above. A single splashing stream of pure moorland water, by the judicious application of science, has been made to form these quiet homes for trout and perch, and in lapse of years Nature herself has set them in frames of waving alder and birch. Innumerable smaller feeders flowing in from the surrounding Chase allow the troutlets to obey their natural instincts, and to ascend into fresher and higher water for spawning-ground. Still higher up the park are instances of artificial landscape on a remarkably large scale. Here is a winding carriage-path gradually descending through miniature woods. Standing on the summit, we can overlook a natural basin of singular beauty, filled with every species of pine and birch, and watered by a leaping torrent. Down the winding path many years gone

by, a certain Princess rode in state with her royal friends; in later days admiring spectators witnessed the gallant Dragon Guards of the same royal lady file merrily down the self-same path, eager for pretended battle on the open Chase. Crossing through the beech woods, so that we may look down on the little village of Wolsley lying in the hollow below, we emerge into the open moors, and gain a full view of the wild and distant Chase stretching towards the south.

The largest of the richly-stocked game-parks, however, lies further eastward. On the highest ground of Cannock Chase, and overlooking the borders of the county, is Beaudesert, rich within itself of woody scenery, but surrounded by miles of wild and very lonely chase. In the thick woods of pine, beech, and scrubby oak haunt the red deer, threatening to the unprotected wanderer. The covers swarm with feathered and furred game. The quaint old red-brick house, the Staffordshire home of the Marquises of Anglesey, is not unpicturesque amongst the varied surroundings of its 'beautiful desert.' A few miles southward over the open moorland and we begin to experience isolated new coal 'sinkings,' the outposts of that steadily-advancing tide of coal industry which has started in this direction from the south. Autumn is the season when the long ranges of this open moorland present most colour and variety. The rich purple bell-heather and the ordinary pink heath flourish equally along with the bracken and bilberry shrub. The foliage to be met with here consists of occasional groves of a dark rough-stemmed oak, or gaunt assemblages of silver birch, for the latter will flourish where few other trees are to be seen.

Strangely enough, the shining white-stemmed birches, which individually possess every grace that a glistening silvery bark and tremulous pale-green leaves can lend, look shrivelled and colourless when grouped in masses and alone. They want the strong relief afforded by the companion foliage of darker hue. The whinberry is the favourite undergrowth of the oak-groves. Besides forming food for the resident game, the luscious little berries, clouded with a bloom as delicate as that on the famed Hambro' grape, are gathered by 'bilberry-pickers,' and sold in large quantities for culinary purposes in neighbouring towns. Occasionally light wicker cargoes of them find their way to the more distant markets of Manchester and London. Curiously enough, the blackberry bush is an exceedingly rare object on the Chase. The interest imparted to the landscape on this part of the district is not owing to any wooded foliage; ample colouring is given by the mingled ling and bracken. Here, too, as evening closes in, a clear sunset will crowd the luminous west with rare effects in crimson, gray, and gold. In the valleys are watercourses peculiar to the Chase, full, but clear as crystal, brawling hurriedly over fawn-coloured pebbles, amidst which fair trout leap and play, and cutting deeper and deeper grooves in the gravelly banks while flowing homeward to the Trent. Their source may, in nearly all cases, be traced to a kind of morass, consisting of rich velvety moss, here and there spiked with stems of the common rush, and very often lying in some hollow on the most elevated plateaus. By cutting through a layer of the loose sodden mosses, we come suddenly upon a bed of hard yellow pebbles, out of which the water is

brimming as from innumerable small springs. Here is an upward leak from the vast storehouse of water contained in the triassic pebble-beds and bunter sandstones overlying the wide-spreading coal-measures. The coal-field of Cannock Chase is distinct from that of the Black Country in the fact that at present the smelting of iron—by far the more demoralising to surrounding scenery of the two operations—is not carried on as a companion process to that of getting coal; so that even in the most busily occupied corner of the Chase, except we approach Walsall or any of its adjacent satellites, the general features of the country are not so entirely obscured as in the southern field. The little villages which cluster around the colliery shafts surrounding the once fashionable health-resort of Cannock are of the same dull-red brick as the colliery shafts which give them sustenance and existence. A kind of sluggish hazy smoke hangs over their locality. The country there is cut up with short lines of railway and tram routes, and solid substantial brick viaducts span the old roads and by-ways. Here and there a solitary winding-engine is seen monotonously lifting its clumsy beam and imparting motion to the light-spoked winding-wheel. The various little colliery pools are discoloured with an ochreous marl.

In the outpost districts further to the north-west the tall shafts are only singly discernible. The buildings of bright-red brick, as yet untainted with accumulating smoke, are more regularly arranged, and present the appearance of scientific design. These are the ventures of private companies imbued with plenty of capital. Wherever they appear, the small red brick villages

spring up to attend them, and costly railways are constructed to convey away the shining black lumps dug from the seams below. The great enemy the Cannock Chase coal-winner has to contend with is the existence of those mighty floods of water pent up in the sandstone, through which he cuts his way to the coveted coal. Ceaseless pumping by powerful engines is scarcely sufficient to maintain a condition favourable for working, and to exhaust the floods of water which pour in through the triassic strata as through a sponge. In the 'keuper sandstones' and 'water-stones' of Cannock Chase is a perfect reservoir of accumulation for those waters, of which all the new red sandstone districts of the Midlands are collecting-grounds. The water is of the purest class, and, by an ingenious arrangement of pumping-stations and reservoirs, a portion of West and the whole of busy South Staffordshire are fed with the indispensable stream. A distinctive feature of the red and spotted marls which in some parts of the country overlie the sandstones are bands of gypsum and rock-salt, the latter varying from a few inches to a foot or two in thickness. Ripple-marks, sun-cracks, and rain-spottings on the marl surface argue the formation of these keuper-beds in large inland salt-lakes. From the earliest times brine-springs have been worked in the district, and seem as inexhaustible now as they did when the Phœnicians first came to these coasts to cull the early fruits of England's mineral wealth.

Long before Cæsar's Roman eagles appeared on our southern shores, Cannock Chase was a petty British kingdom inhabited probably by Silurian tribes, having the Trent for its northern boundary-line. The tops of the

little hills were chosen as the burial-places of their chiefs, and the higher and loftier the seat the nobler the rank of the deceased warrior. Tradition, generally contemned but sometimes vindicated, has been frequently shown to have carried down germs of truth in it with respect to the previous occupation of the district we are visiting. The opening of barrows has contributed largely in this particular. Down in an obscure valley, half over-shadowed by a grove of scrubby foliated oaks, lay, some years back, a small 'tump,' or slight elevation of the earth. Bearing its ragged crops of heather like the rest of the soil, but distinguished in no other way from the surrounding common, it had, nevertheless, always been called by the country folk by the name of the 'Three Kings' Grave.' Nobody assigned any well-worn legend to the mound; it was only known by this curious designation, and served its best purpose, perhaps, as a guide-post to the little valley in which it lay. It did not, however, escape the notice of the archaeologist; and one day a careful opening was made into the heart of the mound, and some facts brought to light interesting to the vindicators of tradition. There were three distinct 'cists,' or charcoal cavities, representing the remains of funeral pyres, and in each were human bones accompanied by scraps of British pottery of very early date. Traces of the Roman occupation of later days are still visible. The existence of *Uriconium* or *Wroxeter* in a direction south-west of the district, and of towns with terminations so significant of Roman origin as *Utttoxeter* and *Rocester* to the north-east of the county, with *Watling Street* running close to the southern bound-

dary, presupposes the fact. Bounding *Wolseley Park* on the west is a long deeply-cut lane, called by the natives 'Sow Street.' It certainly does not bear out the character of a Roman road in its present condition, and has none of the eternal endurance of the passages laid through the country by the later representatives of *Appius*. It is smothered from one end to the other with bright fern beds and foliage of the gnarled oak; and when rainy weather has swollen the moorland streams foot-passage is well-nigh impossible, from the fact that one of the streams runs down the centre of the path. The tangled lane is, nevertheless, of Roman institution, and is known amongst the locally scientific as 'South Street.' Other Roman remains, or conjectured remains, are numerous, long deeply-cut trenches of military character stretching across certain localities. In later times the bold followers of the Duke of Normandy parcelled out the feudal dominion of the Chase, and there resulted a history too long to recite in these pages.

The fossil forests of millions of ages gone by lie in a bituminous grave underneath the whole of this free and open district. It is the interest and duty of man to unearth the coal ferns from their superincumbent sandstone layers, for he needs the heat and light which they absorbed from the early sun of that age. But unhappily, through the exigencies of coal-getting, beauty fades from the face of the land. As yet the most beautiful parts of *Cannock Chase* are free from the coal-pit and its accessories. The time is not far distant when the steadily progressive extension of the coal-getting area will have absorbed all the fair Midland moorland.

C. STUART ALLISON.

MY ELEPHANT STORY.

THE periodical fires commence about February, and end about the middle of April, in Burmah. They are caused either by the natives firing the old grass, or by an old decayed tree falling against another, or by some passer-by throwing a lighted cheroot into the grass which fringes the roadside. Only those who have witnessed these conflagrations can realise the power of this dire element, or believe the speed with which it spreads, and the destruction it causes. A vast plain, say twenty miles in length, and ten or more miles in breadth, covered with all but impenetrable verdure, will be intact one hour; a little smoke may be seen rising from one corner, the fire smoulders awhile; but although at first it spreads but slowly, yet in a quarter of an hour it will be a respectable blaze, in an hour a fiery furnace, and in a couple of hours that vast plain will be but mouldering embers and a few half-consumed stalks of the prairie-grass. That many animals perish in these fires, I have no doubt; that many natives do, I am sure of. Once one of these fires commences, there is no saying where it may end. At first it may be a dead calm; but as the destructive element gets the upper hand, so sure does its accompaniment, the wind, arise and increase in force until it ends by blowing a perfect gale—it veers round all the points of the compass; huge patches of long matted grass, a mass of fire, are borne aloft and carried to great distances, spreading the conflagration wherever they alight. Fires may thus

break out miles and miles apart, and no one be the wiser as to how they originated. Villages and towns even are sometimes thus consumed. No one can calculate the extent or duration of one of these fires. I have escaped no less than five times from such fiery furnaces by the skin of my teeth, I may say, and I will endeavour to describe one of them.

In May 1861 I took out two very nice young fellows, who had visited Tongho, to see a relative. They were bound to the Antipodes. They were, on foot, capital shots and enthusiastic sportsmen, but were somewhat abroad when mounted in a howdah. Shooting from an elephant is a mere knack, which can be soon acquired by a fair shot. I sent on eight elephants by land, and our provisions we sent down in a boat. We gave the animals a week's start, and the boat twenty-four hours', following ourselves in a lounging or racing-boat. Leaving the station at daylight, we reached Ananbo on the Koon Choung (river) by the evening. Our servants had gone on ahead, so we found everything comfortably arranged in a *zyat* or rest-house close to the water's edge. Our servants announcing that dinner was ready whenever 'master pleased,' we took a hasty plunge into the river, and, after a good swim, came out refreshed like giants with wine. Not taking the trouble to dress, we donned our night suits, and were soon partaking of as good a dinner as anybody could wish to sit down to, and which only native servants can prepare *al*

fresco. Ten o'clock saw us comfortably tucked in under the mosquito curtains.

We were up with the lark, and after swallowing a cup of hot coffee, we mounted our animals and went across country to a place called Chawteah, thence to Mabew, thence along the spurs of the Yomahs for fifteen days, enjoying the best of sport. My two comrades got into the way of shooting snap out of the howdahs very creditably, and our bag consisted of seventeen buffaloes, eleven gaur, two tsine, nine tigers, and some fifty deer of various sorts. Small game, too, was plentiful, and many jungle-fowl, pea-fowl, hill partridges, and silver pheasants fell before our smoothbores.

We were in a valley which led into the interior of the Yomahs, and through which meandered a rivulet. The grass was in many places thirty feet high, and very dense. We saw numerous marks of elephants, many of them very fresh; and as there was no prohibition to shooting them in those days, we hoped to bag one or two. The valley widened out, and we had gone well into it, forcing our way through the reeds, when Robinson's elephant showed signs of uneasiness. I thought it might be caused by the presence of a rhinoceros, as we had been told they were occasionally to be found where we were; so I edged my elephant towards his, and beckoned to Patterson to do likewise. We were thus close together when from a patch in front of us a huge tusker rushed at us. He was a rogue, evidently of the worst description, for the rheum was pouring down his face from the must-hole, and he was very offensive, as is usually the case when an elephant is in that state.

Being mounted, we did not wish to molest him, for it is

almost impossible to shoot an elephant dead off an elephant. We could not dismount, as the grass was too high and too dense, but we could not permit him to injure our animals with impunity. We tried to drive him off by making various noises and gesticulations; but as he was not to be cajoled or intimidated, we were forced to open fire. He was only a few yards off, and as ball after ball struck his massive forehead, he became perfectly wild with rage. Budge an inch he would not, but charged us over and over again, shrieking madly. In a few minutes his long ivories were dyed crimson from the blood which poured down his massive head; but so determined was he to close that, although stopped time after time, we had to give way to avoid one of his rushes. His impetus carried him some way beyond us, and we poured all our barrels into his side and back of head as he passed, in the hope of inflicting a fatal wound, but no such luck attended us. He was quickly round, and came at us again. In those days breechloaders were all but unknown, so it took us some time to load our rifles; but we each had a good battery, so had spare weapons in reserve. Our beasts were getting demoralised; our baggage and beating elephants had decamped at the commencement of the fight. We fired volley after volley, and it was a marvel our cattle had escaped being wounded. The monster opposed to us had lost an eye, shot clean out, but he was still undaunted and full of fight. At last our elephant became so restive that we could scarcely load. I, therefore, with Robinson, charged down upon our enemy's flank full pelt while he was chasing Patterson's elephant. We struck him fairly, and I verily believe he

would have measured his length on the ground had he not seized Robinson's howdah with his trunk, and, giving it a mighty wrench, tore it clean off the pad. Such a dreadful thud I never heard before nor since, as man and howdah fell to the ground in a heap. The monster was down on his knees in an instant, and, regardless of our shots, tore our comrade to pieces, scattering his remains far and wide. The howdah, already much damaged, he trampled to pieces with many a fiendish scream; and he paid no heed to us until he had completed his career of destruction. As he rose he looked up at me, and never saw daylight again, for, seizing the moment, I fired point-blank into his remaining eye and extinguished it for ever.

Poor Robinson, we think and hope, died as he fell, for we believe the heavy howdah fell upon his head and killed him instantaneously. Thus he suffered no agonies as he would have done had his death been less sudden. So intent were we on the deadly struggle that we had not noticed smoke rising from the grass, and soon it was a respectable blaze. 'Bhago! bhago, sahib! jungle ko ag lugga hi!'—'Run, sahib, run! the jungle is on fire!' It was easier to say run than to do it in such a place as we were in. Even if we could run, which way to go we did not know; for unless we could reach the river—and which way it lay we did not know—the fire would overtake and overwhelm us before we had forced our way through the reeds a mile; and as far as the eye could reach there appeared to be no break in the interminable grassy plain. As the fire increased the stalks were bursting with loud reports like pistol-shots. The wind, too, began to rise, a bad sign, as, go

which way we might, we should be in equal danger, for we knew it would not blow in the same direction for a quarter of an hour consecutively. It takes some time to tell, but the flames spread with the speed of lightning. Already on two sides of us were walls of fire; what to do we knew not, but thought it best to leave our course to the sagacity of our animals, who, hitting off a path already made by wild beasts, rushed along at their best speed. The wild elephant stumbled at every step, for it was blind, and its trunk too disabled to serve as a guide; yet it followed our retreating footsteps guided by the sound. Fast as we went, the devouring element followed ten times faster.

The wind now was a perfect hurricane, and the fiery flames darted forward, threatening every moment to engulf us, licking up the very grass from almost beneath the elephants' feet. Innumerable birds, principally of the king crow species, seemed to revel in the heat and smoke, and were darting about almost within reach of the flames, chasing locusts, grasshoppers, and other insects as they rose to escape cremation. Flakes of lighted grass several feet in width were floating about, increasing the conflagration here and there, near and far.

The smoke, too, was blinding; the heat blistered our faces and hands and singed the hair on our faces. The natives were green with fright; it was indeed a race with death, for one moment's contact with that fiery blast would convert us into cinders.

We could still see that the wild monster, the cause of all our trouble, was following in our wake, but he was very weak and tottered along with difficulty. The fire was but a yard or two behind

him, when he fell over a prostrate log, and before he could recover himself he was enveloped in flames. One prolonged heart-rending scream and his earthly career was over.

The fire at last all but overtook us; the flames were darting overhead, our clothes were scorched, and we passed through the agonies of fifty deaths. Apparently no hope was left us, and we resigned ourselves to our impending fate. But a merciful Providence had decreed that we should escape death this time; the wind changed and slightly retarded the flames, whilst in our front appeared an opening through which we rushed, and were floundering the next instant in the cool and refreshing waters of the Koon. Even then we were in extreme peril of being suffocated, so dense was the heated atmosphere. The elephants of their own accord lay down in the stream, whilst we threw ourselves into the water to cool our burning bodies. As heated air ascends, we were comparatively safe in our lowly position; and although the fiery furnace passed overhead, setting fire to the reeds on the opposite side, we remained half submerged until the danger was past. One of our poor elephants had his hind quarters so burnt that the skin peeled off, and it was months before he was fit for work.

Though the fire had swept past and was miles distant in a few minutes, the surface of the ground was almost red-hot, and it was

night before we could leave the bed of the stream. We then wended our way back sorrowfully to Chowteah, and rested there a couple of days before we ventured to return to collect the remains of our poor friend. On going back to the scene of conflict, nothing remained of the elephant but a few charred bones and a piece of one tusk, which had been partially buried in the ground by the force with which the animal had fallen forward; even his enormous head had been pulverized into ashes. As for our poor comrade, we did not recover one atom. His remains had been converted into dust and ashes. We should not have recognised the spot where he fell even, had it not been for portions of rifle-barrels distorted out of all shape which we found on the ground. The rib of one was bent almost into a circle, and so brittle that when struck it broke into little bits. Such is the irresistible force of a jungle fire. The cause of the fire was never correctly ascertained. We supposed it was caused by a box of matches, which had been crushed and ignited either by the falling howdah or by our antagonist's foot.

Our shooting came abruptly to an end. Patterson went down by boat to Rangoon and embarked for New Zealand, where he is still a prosperous farmer. I hear from him occasionally. I returned to Tongho in my boat, and am not likely ever to forget our encounter with the rogue, nor our providential escape on that occasion.

F. T. P.

AN APPLE-GATHERING.

Just such another blowy day,
With grand capricious sky,
And in the orchard, glad and gay,
Were cousin Joan and I;
Both mounted on a ladder long, the apples all among—
My seat the top, her dainty feet upon a lower rung.

And O, how sweet the hazel eyes
That there looked up at me!
The truest, softest, deepest eyes
That ever I shall see.
Then what a perfect mouth! I thought it would be simple bliss
If from those rosy lips I might but steal one little kiss.

For was I not her cousin, too?
And half I bent my head;
But not the dreadful thing to do—
No, no! I've ever said.
But she, perchance, had fancied so, and, sudden, sideways bent,
And, from the movement, to the ground the ladder staggering
went.

My graceful darling, lovely Joan,
Fell lightly, without harm;
And I, as she arose alone,
Scarce felt my broken arm.
But when, without a glance, and looking scornful, cold, and
proud,
She turned away, then, with the twofold pain, I groaned aloud.

She started, and her face grew white;
But then fell to my share
Such gentle ministries, that light
Seemed all the pain to bear.
O fingers deft and tender, once in mine I held you fast,
And, humbly craving, got the kiss I longed so for at last.

And with it, too, my sweetheart Joan,
Whose pity grew to love;
Still, who had never been my own
But for that day above—
Then, at the apple-gathering in the dear old apple-tree,
When not a single fruit was plucked by my fair wife or me.

J. G. GRESHAM.

THE FOREIGNERS.

BY ELEANOR C. PRICE, AUTHOR OF 'A FRENCH HEIRESS,'
'VALENTINA,' ETC.

CHAPTER XXXV.

SANDRIDGE.

THOUGH Pauline, perhaps fortunately for herself, had seen nothing of Gérard that day at Cleeve, Fate had allowed him to have a glimpse of her.

Just as his train to London was passing slowly out of the station, she and Ben Dunstan were close to it, coming up the broad pathway with the sun full upon them. Gérard started forward in his carriage and stared at this apparition; it certainly was Pauline, whom he had seen in the Park only the day before yesterday. Finding himself down at Cleeve had been strange enough; it was still more strange to see her there. Her aunt had not said she was coming, but then he had not ventured to inquire for her. The man who was walking with her—Gérard looked at him with a vague feeling of recognition, perceiving that he was not her husband, but only, after some time, remembering that he was the man who had followed the Mowbrays to France with bad news, and had gone away with them from Maulévrier. These two were talking very cheerfully, and Pauline was even laughing. Gérard carried the sight of her smiling face all the way to town with him; for, in an instant, the train had hurried on, a wall and some trees had come between, and she was hidden from him. That momentary glimpse was almost like a

dream; and he asked himself many times afterwards whether it was really Pauline that he saw.

The next afternoon he went down to Sandridge. This was not a pretty or fashionable suburb; it had an atmosphere of bags and business, and was quite out of the way of society; but it was cheap, and there was a healthy breeziness about it, the result of a high hill and a common, with gorse and fern and holly bushes, and broad sandy walks leading to an actual fir wood. This belonged to a rich man who had built his house on the edge of it, so that it was not in danger of being cut down at present. There were new roads and rows of houses in every direction from the station, and Monsieur de Maulévrier, coming out and seeing no cabs—for they generally took a holiday on Saturday afternoon, not being vain enough to expect any strangers from London, and all the Sandridge people being at home—turned back to the ticket collector, and asked him the way to The Pines.

'The Pines! Don't know, sir, I'm sure,' said the man, at the same moment receiving the tickets of a boy and girl, who had come down in Gérard's carriage from London.

'The house of Mr. Mowbray,' said Gérard, looking helplessly up and down the road. 'Do not you know? Have you no cabs here?'

'Well, there's none just at present. I'm a stranger myself,' said the ticket collector; and then he addressed the lad, who was just passing on, he and his companion having bestowed quick curious glances on Gérard, which would have been hearty stares had not good manners forbidden it. Gérard looked pale and worn and wild; his dark eyes were hollow and sad; but his voice and manner were very agreeable, and impressed even the hard surface of an official. Of course he was evidently a foreigner; but being a perfectly well-bred one, he had no foreign exaggeration.

'Can you tell this gentleman, sir?' said the collector. 'He wants to go to The Pines, Mr. Mowbray's. Do you know whereabouts it is?'

'Yes; I am going that way myself,' said the boy. 'We shall be glad to show you the way,' he added to Gérard, who bowed gratefully, glancing from him to the plain, bright, eager face of his sister.

'You want to see Mr. Mowbray?' said the lad, as they started off together.

'Yes, I have come down on purpose. Do you know him? Do you think I am likely to find him at home?'

'He is at home to-day. He won't be far off, at any rate.'

'I had the pleasure of travelling down just now with you and mademoiselle,' said Gérard.

'Yes. My sister.'

'Ah—mademoiselle your sister!' with a bow to the young girl, who coloured, and smiled, and looked the other way.

'The fact is,' said her brother bluntly, 'Mr. Mowbray is our father, you know, so it's very easy for us to show you the way to The Pines.'

'Is it possible? You astonish

me!' said Gérard. 'How very fortunate for me! But we must be friends, then, because your father is a great friend of mine.'

'Is he? Well, I'm Philip Mowbray, and I suspect it was you they stayed with last summer.'

'Yes, my name is Maulévrier.'

'That's rather difficult for me,' said Philip. 'I can't talk French. But I am sure my father will be glad to see you, because he often talks about you, and since you saw him he has written a book about France.'

'Ah, he was talking about it. And has he fixed on the title yet? I understand the book is not published.'

'No; the publishers are so tiresome. They want to make such a lot, you see, and to cut my father off with nothing. It's always the way.'

'We have thought of a great many titles,' Kitty joined in, 'but I believe papa will stick to his own—*Royalty in Shadow*: what do you think of that? He has written a novel too, and the name of that is awfully troublesome. Fancy, one man suggested *Turrets and Tears*, because it was a tragical sort of story, and the scene was in a French château. It is so interesting. Shall you have time to look at it this afternoon?'

'I am afraid not,' said Gérard, smiling at her. 'I have not asked yet for Mrs. Mowbray. Is she quite well, and does the literary work agree with your father?'

'They are both pretty well, thanks,' said Philip.

'I am not quite so neglectful as I seem, though,' Gérard went on, 'for I went down the day before yesterday to your old home, Cleeve, hoping to find you all there.'

'I only wish you had,' sighed Kitty.

'What did you do?' asked Philip. 'Come straight back again!'

'Not quite. In search of your father's address, I went on to Croome yesterday, and paid a visit to your most charming aunt there.'

'O, Aunt Lucia!' they both said, half laughing.

'Then you saw my sister,' said Kitty, 'and she could tell you all about us.'

'No, mademoiselle. I did not see your sister—except that I caught a glimpse of her from the carriage-window, as I left Cleeve Station yesterday afternoon. I was sorry to have missed her. I hope she is very well. Have you seen her lately?'

'O yes, she has been staying with us,' said Kitty. 'She was very ill last year, you know, but I think she is strong again now.'

The three had been walking together up a broad road, slightly rising from the station. On each side were villas and gay little gardens, and at the far end, the road opened on the common, where it divided to the right and left, and the brown pleasant paths led on to the fir wood. Philip and Kitty, with their tall companion, turned into one of these villa-gardens, and the talk about Pauline came to a sudden end.

'They will be surprised,' said Kitty, half to herself.

Philip opened the door with his latch-key, walked on down the narrow hall, and threw open the drawing-room door at the end. It was a small room, in which the old Cleeve furniture looked large and shabby; but there was comfort and cheerfulness too, plenty of books, and a pleasant look-out down a sloping garden, and over other gardens beyond. The sun was shining in on Mrs. Mowbray,

who sat in a low chair reading the newspaper.

'A friend of yours,' said Philip, who would not venture on the Frenchman's name; and with no more announcement than this, Gérard came forward, a startling sight indeed to Mrs. Mowbray. She coloured, and so did he, as their eyes met; but it was impossible to receive him with anything but hearty friendliness.

'Monsieur de Maulévrier! this is a pleasure we did not at all expect,' said Mrs. Mowbray, smiling kindly at the young man, who took the hand she held out and kissed it, Kitty staring fixedly in the background, and Philip breaking into a sort of rapture of grins.

After a moment these two young people went away to tell their father, and Mrs. Mowbray began to ask Gérard questions about his mother and his brothers and everybody she could think of in France. She was a good deal disturbed at his coming: being wiser than Aunt Lucia, she felt quite sure that he was not married, and that something had happened to break off his engagement. So much the better, she thought, both for him and for Mademoiselle de Brye; but she did not, for all that, like the idea of his having come to see Pauline. Her child's prospects were at present much too good to be spoilt by the intrusion of a Frenchman, however charming he might be. Aunt Lucia hated foreigners, she had always said so; and Mrs. Mowbray herself did not love them much. She had thought it a happy thing that the silly romance of last summer was passing out of Pauline's mind; it really must not be renewed. Mrs. Mowbray felt thankful that Pauline had gone back to her aunt just in time to miss this troublesome visitor.

Gérard, meanwhile, did not seem particularly sentimental. He was rather cheerful and agreeable, for him; he told her how he had come across her son and daughter at the station, and then he went on to astonish her with the account of his visit to Cleeve and Croome.

Mrs. Mowbray, as she listened, began to think that Providence was certainly watching over Pauline.

'I am sure it was very good of you to take so much trouble to find us,' she said rather sadly. 'We feel quite buried here—at least I do. Mr. Mowbray goes to town almost every day. The place is extremely dull, but it is healthy for the children.'

'I did not like to be in England without seeing you and Mr. Mowbray,' said Gérard. 'He so kindly wished me to come when he was with us last year. I am glad to find, madame, that you have not forgotten me.'

'That was not likely,' said Mrs. Mowbray. 'Have you been in England long?'

'Only three or four days. To tell you the truth, madame, I came intending to be quite solitary. I should have visited London and gone back to France, most likely, without making any attempt to find my friends. But three days ago I was in the Park one morning, and I accidentally saw—in fact, I saw your daughter there, and I perceived—'

'O—yes,' said Mrs. Mowbray, trying not to show her vexation; 'I see; but did you speak to her? she did not tell me.'

'No, she did not see me, and I would not intrude myself,' said Gérard gravely. 'But after that I thought I might be allowed to pay you a visit. May I hope that she is well and happy, and that you are contented?'

'Yes, thank you; she is very well,' said Mrs. Mowbray.

'She must be a sad loss to you, and to her brothers and sisters.'

'Yes; but it is better for her, on the whole.' Pauline's mother reflected that of course Aunt Lucia, in her absurd openness, had talked to him by the hour about Pauline; and then the question occurred to her, Could Aunt Lucia possibly have liked him, in spite of his birth? She did not quite understand how Gérard had argued his case just now, but she put that down to the confusion of her own brains.

'Ah! no doubt,' said Gérard, with something like a sigh. 'I saw her again yesterday at Cleeve Station—my train was just going out; she did not see me. She looked laughing and beautiful.'

At this moment Mr. Mowbray came into the room. If his wife was changed and aged by trouble, he certainly was not. He welcomed Gérard warmly and affectionately, and after they had talked for some time about France, about London, about books, he began asking the young man questions about himself.

Mr. Mowbray was not a man of regrets; he lived and was enthusiastic in the present, and his only remark when he heard of Gérard's visit to the West was, 'What a pity you should have wasted your time in running down there! Well, I want to know what you have been doing lately at Maulévrier.'

'The old answer, monsieur—nothing,' said Gérard, in his quiet resigned way.

'For shame!' said Mr. Mowbray, laughing. 'Nothing at all! And your brothers? I don't suppose they would have the same sad account to give of themselves. What are they doing? Did your

brother Victor go to Africa? He told me it was likely.'

'O no! Victor has left the army; he is married. I thought you must know,' said Gérard, slightly confused.

'How should I have known?' said Mr. Mowbray. 'You never told me anything about it. Some one told us last year that it was you, and not any of your brothers, who were likely to marry.'

Gérard looked steadily at his hat. He seemed a little uncomfortable, and Mrs. Mowbray frowned at her husband; she thought the young man ought not to be cross-questioned in this way. But Gérard was not angry; he raised his eyes after a moment, and smiled. Mr. and Mrs. Mowbray could not know all, he thought; they could not know the full badness of his behaviour last summer, or they would not have welcomed him so kindly; and, after all, now that she was married, nothing mattered very much.

'It was intended that I should marry,' he said. 'Only one of us could afford it; we made a family arrangement. I believe these things are not known in England. For various reasons we altered our plans, and Victor took my place.'

'And whom did he marry? Any one we have met?' asked Mrs. Mowbray.

'Yes, madame; you met her at Tourlyon—Mademoiselle de Brye.'

'O, indeed!'

The idea of this transfer was almost too much for Mrs. Mowbray, and she left any further questions to her husband. She looked out of the window, and reflected that the young man could not now have any hope of winning Pauline. He had nothing, and, as far as he knew,

Pauline was as poor as himself. At any rate, his first seeking them out must have been without any views of the kind, though there was no knowing what encouragement Aunt Lucia might have given him. She vaguely heard the talk going on, Gérard telling Mr. Mowbray that his brother and his wife had been spending the winter in Paris, but that they were coming to Maulévrier for a little time in the summer.

Then a dark young man with a book in his hand came strolling up the garden-path, and, approaching the window, glanced up in surprise at the foreign-looking stranger.

'Come in, Ralph,' said his father, as he slowly mounted the steps to the window. 'You have heard of Monsieur de Maulévrier. My eldest son,' he added to Gérard.

This affectionate familiar way of speaking was just like Mr. Mowbray, Gérard thought. He, no doubt, liked this man very much, and was a charming father-in-law. But that did not give the man any claim on Gérard's friendship. He bowed stiffly to Ralph, who, on his side, was not effusive. Mr. Mowbray lifted his eyebrows in surprise and vexation, and afterwards reproached Ralph with his horrid manners.

'Because a man is a Frenchman, Ralph,' he said, 'you need not behave to him as if he was a Turk.'

'Turk! I like Turks,' said Ralph. 'But I can't stand those stuck-up fellows. And he looked at me as if I was a German.'

Philip and Kitty agreed with their father that it must have been Ralph's own fault, for Monsieur de Maulévrier was as jolly as possible when he walked with them from the station. Anyhow, for some reason, the entrance of

Ralph made a great change in Gérard. He stood up, looking pale and proud, and began saying good-bye to Mrs. Mowbray.

'You are not going yet,' Mr. Mowbray remonstrated. 'Stay and dine with us; or if you can't stay to-day, come to-morrow.'

'Yes, do; we shall be so glad,' said his wife.

But Gérard would not accept the invitation. He was not sure of being in town; he thought he was engaged. Mrs. Mowbray, perhaps, thinking of her cook's uncertainties, was not so very sorry.

Mr. Mowbray walked down with the young man to the station. As soon as they were out of the house Gérard recovered himself; and he ended by giving Mr. Mowbray the name of his hotel, and begging him to come and see him, which his friend promised to do.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

CASTLES.

ON Monday Mr. Mowbray had a note from Gérard, asking him to dine with him that evening at his hotel. He went, though a little puzzled by the young man's having refused his invitations. Ralph said it was all the confounded airs of a beggarly Frenchman, who thought himself somebody; but Ralph found no one to agree with him, not even Philip, whose dislike of foreigners was generally stronger than his own. Mr. Mowbray said that Gérard de Maulévrier was a thoroughly good fellow, and had never given himself airs in his life.

'Why, father, he's airs all over,' said Ralph. 'Who ever saw an ordinary man look like that?'

'He is not an ordinary man; there you are right,' said Mr.

Mowbray; and he went off to London to dine with Gérard.

These two were born companions; they were never at a loss for something to talk about. Mr. Mowbray, of course, was much the greater talker of the two; but he found in Gérard a person capable of listening to all his ideas, and of sympathising, even if he did not thoroughly understand.

'You shall look over the manuscript. I have it at home,' said Mr. Mowbray, talking of one of his attempts. 'You had better come down to-morrow. Come at four or five o'clock, and stay to dinner.'

Gérard hesitated again, and Mr. Mowbray looked at him curiously; for he had told him not long before that he had no friends in London. He did not press him just then, however. Presently, after a little more talk about the manuscript, Gérard asked, in a careless sort of way,

'Is your son-in-law with you still? Does he take an interest in these things?'

'My son-in-law?' repeated Mr. Mowbray.

'I do not know his name,' said Gérard — 'I have not asked; and the other day you called him, I think, by a Christian name. But I see by your face he does not care for books,' he added, smiling.

'My dear fellow,' said Mr. Mowbray, 'I don't know what you are talking about. My son-in-law? Have you met a man who calls himself my son-in-law? What on earth do you mean?'

'It is not possible that I am mistaken,' said Gérard, fixing his eyes on Mr. Mowbray's astonished face. 'The husband of your daughter. The gentleman you introduced to me as your eldest son. I understood—it was your amiable way of speaking. And I

knew him by sight. I had seen him in the Park with her, as I told Madame Mowbray, before I went down to Cleeve. I should, perhaps, be less confused if I knew his name.'

'I see,' said Mr. Mowbray, who had now collected his ideas. 'Nobody had told you, then, that my daughter was married. You saw her with that young fellow in the Park, and drew your own conclusion.'

'Well, I am not very clever in English customs; but surely it was a natural conclusion?'

'Perhaps it was, from your point of view,' said Mr. Mowbray, looking at Gérard, with a smile.

The young man got up from his chair, and walked across to the fireplace. He stood there with his head bent, thoughtfully looking on the floor. Mr. Mowbray watched him with amused eyes.

'Am I to understand—' Gérard began at last.

'That girls in England are allowed to go out with their brothers?'

'It was her brother, then! That young man is your son?'

'My eldest boy.'

'Ah! Then forgive my asking. I have entirely deceived myself, it seems. Perhaps Mademoiselle Mowbray is not married, after all?'

'She certainly was not married three days ago, when she went down to Somersetshire.'

'Then her home is still with you?'

'I think so,' said Pauline's father. 'But I believe my aunt, whom you saw the other day, is of a different opinion. She took possession of my daughter last autumn, and does not seem inclined to give her up. Mrs. Mowbray is resigned, and therefore I have no alternative. You

will find some day, my friend, that all the arrangements in life are made by women.'

'They have a great deal of good sense,' said Gérard quietly.

'Almost too much, I sometimes think,' said Mr. Mowbray.

He now found his young host rather dreamy and absent, and not quite so intelligent on literary subjects as he had been earlier in the evening. He was himself much amused and interested by Gérard's mistake about Pauline, and many ideas went racing each other through his active brain. To begin with, it would be a fine story to tell his wife, though he resolved, with unnatural prudence, that it should go no further. Ralph certainly should not know why the Marquis de Maulévrier had looked at him 'as if he was a German.'

Mr. Mowbray was a good deal touched; he had a great fancy for Gérard, and, in fact, he gave him more credit than he deserved, for he now felt sure that the new arrangement at Maulévrier, which made Victor the head of the house, was entirely owing to Gérard's hopeless love for Pauline. His wife had hinted to him, as a partial explanation of Pauline's low spirits in the autumn, that the young people had been inclined to like each other. He had laughed then; but Gérard's manner now showed him that she was probably right. Like her, he thought to himself that the affair was hopeless, Gérard, of course, having nothing—unless Aunt Lucia— But he knew in his heart that Aunt Lucia would be a foolish old woman if she did anything of the kind. Even if she meant—and he thought that likely enough—to leave everything to Pauline in the end, she might easily live twenty years more. Immortal youth seemed to belong to a crea-

ture like her. Gérard and Pauline could not marry in hope of her inheritance, and pay their bills with hope for twenty years. The idea was nonsensical: and nobody had any right to expect that she would make Pauline an allowance sufficient for them to live upon. A regular organised generosity like this was the last thing to be expected from Aunt Lucia, even if she thought such a marriage a good thing for Pauline; and no doubt all the common sense she had would tell her that the girl would be much better and happier married to a steady solvent Englishman. Yet Pauline's father, as he went back to Sandridge that night, amused himself with dreaming strange dreams about her.

Before leaving Gérard, he had renewed his invitation to him for the next day, which was instantly and cordially accepted. It was laughable to think that Ralph had been the innocent obstacle.

In the next few days Gérard and his friends met constantly. Then Mrs. Mowbray asked him to stay a week with them, and he came, and was established as an intimate friend in the little house at Sandridge. She had been rather unwilling to give this invitation; but her husband wished it so strongly, and talked so much about repaying Gérard's hospitality, and showing him something of English life—the children, too, thought it such a fine holiday amusement—that she was obliged to consent, and to hide her own anxieties. It would have been all very well to entertain the young man at Cleeve Lodge—but here! Mrs. Mowbray felt the change more acutely than any of them, and with all her strength of mind was very sensitive. She did not feel familiar enough with Gérard to treat him like one of

her own boys; Mr. Mowbray's easy intimacy with him always surprised her a little; she could hardly believe, though Mr. Mowbray laughed at her, that a man whose home was Maulévrier did not find the Sandridge villa too dreadful a contrast.

Still Gérard seemed quite happy, in his quiet way; the whole household liked him; even Ralph came round and confessed that his airs wore off on further acquaintance. Mr. Mowbray took him to see publishers and editors, and showed him London in all its aspects. The weather was beautiful, and they made expeditions to everything worth seeing in the neighbourhood. Little delicate George went about hanging to the Frenchman's arm, and Kitty, full of chatter, marched on his other side. Pauline, of course, was often mentioned, but never by him; and his grave listening face did not change when they talked of her.

So the week passed, and Gérard was fulfilling his old wish of seeing English life, which he had always fancied so pleasant. Of course, it was life on a small scale as far as outward show and extra comfort went; but Gérard was a man of simple tastes—he had not been brought up luxuriously; and as to the tone of life in Mr. Mowbray's household, he perceived, and quite rightly, that it could not anywhere have been higher or more refined. He saw no selfishness, no worldliness, no strain after appearances. He would have been surprised to hear that Pauline, the last visitor, had found it all unbearably dismal and depressing; but then he had never lived with them at Cleeve, and women have quicker senses than men, and can hear the hinges creak sometimes, no matter how carefully they are oiled.

On Gérard's last evening, he was sitting up late with Mr. Mowbray over his study fire, when his friend asked him what his plans were.

'I must go back to France,' said Gérard; and then he sighed.

'You have not been so very long in England,' said Mr. Mowbray.

'Long enough to admire her even more than I did before. But if one cannot stay always, it is best not to stay too long.'

Mr. Mowbray looked at him, smiling.

'Do you mean that you would like to stay always?'

'No; I am not such a bad Frenchman as that,' said Gérard, recollecting himself. 'But England has a very great charm for me, and it grows stronger every day. It is best not to be under a charm.'

'That is true,' said Mr. Mowbray.

A few hours before, he had come into the drawing-room, and found Gérard in a low chair beside Mrs. Mowbray's work-table—she was not in the room—gazing at a pretty photograph of Pauline which always stood there. He had started up a little confused, and had begun to ask questions about something; but Mr. Mowbray, like other absent people, noticed things very keenly when he noticed them at all. He was more amused and interested than surprised, therefore, when that evening, after being much more dreamy than usual, and talking in this rather enthusiastic way about England, Gérard presently began to make his confession—a hopeless and useless one, as he knew; but it seemed as if he could not keep it back any longer.

'You have been very good to me, monsieur,' he said; 'you are one of the few friends I have. I

should like to tell you my history.'

'Go on,' said Mr. Mowbray. 'It is not the first time that we have railed on Fate together.'

'I am not asking anything,' said Gérard—'I have not the right or the power; and I know it is no use railing. But I have a great trouble, and I should like you to know it.'

'I think I have guessed it, my dear fellow,' said Mr. Mowbray. 'I am sorry for you. I suppose that explains your abdicating in favour of Victor?'

Gérard coloured, and hesitated. It seemed impossible to explain to Pauline's father that the breaking off was not his own doing, but Mademoiselle de Brye's.

'I could not displease my mother and all the family,' he muttered.

Probably any man but Mr. Mowbray would have seen more than a suspicion of weakness about his look and manner, and would have lost patience with him; but Mr. Mowbray was thoroughly fond of him, and understood French feeling quite well enough to enter into his difficulties.

'No,' he said; 'your mother would not willingly have given you up to an Englishwoman.'

'It was as hopeless last year as it is now,' said Gérard.

'I am sorry,' Mr. Mowbray repeated. 'Let me ask—did my daughter know anything of it?'

'I could not help showing her one day. It was wrong, I know; but I had put a great restraint on myself, and this was at the last, when you were all going away. I thought she was sorry to go, and at the moment I could not bear parting with her.'

'And you think she—' Mr. Mowbray began, and checked himself.

'O yes, certainly—then,' Gérard answered, with a sudden bright look. 'The other day, when I thought she was married, I supposed she had forgotten everything.'

'It would not have been wonderful if she had,' said Mr. Mowbray gravely. 'In fact, it was her duty; and you ought not to have said a word, Gérard, for, if I understand things rightly, you were engaged at the time. If Pauline had told me, I should have been in a rage.'

'Yes, you would have been right. I had no excuse, except one,' said Gérard. 'But I am not engaged now.'

Mr. Mowbray stroked his face thoughtfully, perhaps to hide a smile, for to his mind there was something comic, as well as touching, in all this. Gérard was so boyish in his confidence; he seemed to have such perfect faith in his friend's indulgence, while his friend saw more clearly every moment that he ought to be angry with him. The whole thing was so silly, provoking, and sad, that any man but Mr. Mowbray would have lost his temper, and at least mentally called Gérard names. To this amiable philosopher he was a study of French sentiment: besides which, he really loved the melancholy fellow, with his handsome face and gentle ways. He could not realise the badness of his conduct in making unauthorised love to Pauline. It may seem unnatural in more ways than one, but Pauline's father, living in the present, had actually more sympathy at that moment with Gérard than with Pauline.

'I am glad to hear that you are not engaged now,' he said after a pause—'for your own sake, that is. I am afraid it makes no difference to anybody else. I understand, don't I, that you have

given up everything to your brother? Excuse plain language.'

'You are right, monsieur,' said Gérard dismally. 'So I had better go back to France, and forget. If I had not seen her at all, it would have been easier.'

'You must screw up your courage. Very few things are easy; but resolution is a splendid doctor, and so is time.'

'Ah, yes,' said Gérard. 'Suppose I had been free, and had been able to come to you and ask you, would you have consented?'

'It is possible that I might,' said Mr. Mowbray. 'The different country is a drawback, you know, for one's daughter, and so is the religion. Mrs. Mowbray, I think, would have seen those things more strongly than I should. There is my aunt, too; and I can tell you that Pauline would depend much more on her consent than on mine or her mother's.'

'Miss Mowbray seems a most charming person,' said Gérard.

'Yes, but she is a whimsical person. I am glad she made herself pleasant to you.'

Gérard could honestly say that Miss Mowbray had made herself very pleasant to him. There had been things in her manner that puzzled him; but if she was whimsical, that perhaps explained them; and, at any rate, it was not necessary to tell Mr. Mowbray that he feared she had some prejudice against his name.

They talked a little about Croome. The place where Pauline lived was the most interesting place on earth; and now that Gérard was allowed to speak of Pauline, he cared for no other subject. Presently Mr. Mowbray told him in plain words that he expected his aunt to leave everything to Pauline. Of course he could not speak positively; but she had, to all intents and pur-

poses, adopted the girl; she was fonder of her than of anybody; she knew that Pauline's parents would have nothing, less than nothing, to give her. Mr. Mowbray, most sanguine of men, would be very much surprised if Croome Court did not some day belong to Pauline.

'But the man who marries her will have to live there at least part of the year, I suppose,' said Mr. Mowbray, staring into the fire. As Gérard made no response, he presently glanced at him, and added: 'A man, for instance, with all his interests in France might not care for that condition.'

'On the contrary,' exclaimed Gérard, flushing crimson. 'Do you mean, monsieur—you cannot mean—'

'Be quiet; don't excite yourself. I am only talking of chances and possibilities,' said Mr. Mowbray. 'My aunt is not an old woman; I hope she may live at least five-and-twenty years more. For that time Pauline will have nothing at all of her own, and your fortune, my friend, is the same as hers.'

'Yes, yes, it is hopeless.'

'Unless—if Pauline liked you—Miss Mowbray might take it into her head to make you both happy by settling a yearly income upon her. She might do it very well, if she chose, but I don't at all undertake to say that she will.'

'I would live always in England, to please her,' murmured Gérard.

'Are not you reckoning without Madame de Maulévrier? But we have talked enough nonsense; let us be plain and businesslike. You are going back to France, you say? You shall go. I will run down to Croome by and by, and talk things over with my aunt. If I have any good news I will

write it to you. You will lay it before your mother, get her consent, and then—come and see us again. You will write to me, and tell me your intentions, when you have come to a clear agreement with your mother. That is the right way of doing things, I think. Now, good-night.'

'How am I to thank you?' exclaimed Gérard.

'Wait, my dear fellow. At present il n'y a pas de quoi.'

It may be suspected that Mr. Mowbray's heart misgave him a little as to the wisdom of all this encouragement. For he told Mrs. Mowbray nothing about it till the next evening, when Gérard was gone, and then was rather angry at her surprise and consternation. She did not think it at all a happy fate for Pauline to marry the Marquis, who of course would never live in England, at least while his mother was alive; she was not at all sure that Pauline cared about him now, though she had liked him a little last summer.

'He thought she liked him a good deal,' said Mr. Mowbray.

'He had no business to think so. She had too much sense. She would have told me,' said Mrs. Mowbray, much disturbed. 'However, I am sure Aunt Lucia will agree with me that a comfortable English marriage will be far the best thing for Pauline, and of course all your fine plans depend entirely on her.'

'Entirely,' said Mr. Mowbray, relapsing into good-humour. 'I told Maulévrier that, and if Polly doesn't care for him, that settles the question. But it would be a splendid match for him, poor fellow. I don't like to think of such a nice fellow being shelved in that heartless unnatural way—all because of Polly, too.'

'It is rather sad, but we can't

help those French customs. It seems to me you think of the advantages for him, more than the disadvantages for Polly.'

'That, my dear, is because I am an altruist.'

'I never should have believed,' said Mrs. Mowbray thoughtfully, 'that the young man would have had strength of mind to fight it out with his mother, and to break off that engagement. Madame de Maulévrier adored him, and I know it must have been a horrid trial to her to make that disagreeable Victor the eldest son. It is a strange affair altogether; but I cannot say I wish Pauline to marry him, and I think you had much better have let it alone.'

'Ah, you would have listened to him in stony silence, no doubt. Women are so hard-hearted,' said Mr. Mowbray.

'Men are such geese,' replied his wife.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE RECTOR OF CROOME.

MR. DUNSTAN, of course, did not in the least believe that Monsieur de Maulévrier had come to Croome simply to ask Miss Mowbray for her nephew's address. That idea was rather too amusing. Not that he mentioned any other possible motive to Miss Mowbray; but he was angry and rude when she told him of the Frenchman's visit, and laughed offensively when she said she had not been civil to him. Miss Mowbray, for once, was a little impatient with her friend Ben, and remarked that in order to meet with thoroughly narrow-minded prejudice it was not at all necessary to cross the Channel.

'Your admiring foreigners is a new thing,' said Ben. 'But women are all alike. A tall fellow with a long nose, who makes

bows to you—there you have your model. So good-looking! such charming manners! What do his morals, or his language, or anything else, signify?'

'Go away, please. You are envious and stupid, and I am tired of your nonsense,' said Miss Mowbray.

Ben went away, very anxious and miserable in his mind. He showed his feelings during the next few days by being defiant and rude to everybody except Pauline. In her presence he was silent and much more subdued than before, watching her with a half-hidden wistfulness. One may suspect that she understood his feelings; for, though the smiles of her first return died away, and she did not chatter to him any more, there was a certain softness in her manner to him, an uncertainty, a kind of regret. Pauline was just then in suspense, not unnaturally wondering what was to become of her; and Ben went in and out like a faithful dog, ready to fetch and carry for her. He thought she liked him better than in the autumn; that day at Cleeve he even began to hope a little again. And then to come back to Croome and hear that the Frenchman was prowling about England! it would have been too much for the mildest temper. Ben brooded over it day and night; and every time he went to the Court he expected to find Gérard there, or to hear that he was coming. When he met Pauline in the lanes, he looked beyond her to see if there was a black shadow following. But the dreaded rival did not come; he heard no more of him.

In truth, Pauline hardly knew what she wished at this time; she dared not have any wish or hope connected with Gérard. She almost feared and shrank from the

thought of him. It now seemed to her that she was born for a quiet easy life, not for romance. Romance was pain and foolishness. She could never give Gérard half as much as he would expect from her. Yet there were moments when she knew, poor child, having a heart able to speak the truth sometimes, that the joy of seeing him again would be almost madness.

Then prudence stepped in, and reminded her that if he had not come, she would have resigned herself quietly and taken life on a lower and more prosaic level. Much safer, much better, much happier in the end, said common sense; but, just at present, the balance of Pauline's mind was disturbed, and she felt that all depended on one thing—what would Gérard do?

In one way, his behaviour was certainly strange. He had not mentioned her name to her aunt; and now he did not seem to have any idea of trying to see her, for, to her great amazement, she heard of his staying at Sandridge—staying on day after day in the little house that Pauline thought so sad, liked by everybody, a dear friend of the children, going about everywhere with her father. And yet there came no message, no hint of another visit to Croome. He was happy with them all; he might, as far as appearances went, have forgotten that she existed and belonged to them. Her mother wrote of him quite openly and naturally, as if he was any other visitor, and told her, as a little piece of ordinary gossip, of Victor's marriage to Mademoiselle de Brie. This was good news to Pauline, and yet she hardly knew why. How could it matter to her? It only meant, as she very well knew, that Gérard must be a hermit for the rest of his days.

Still she thought he might somehow have shown a little remembrance of her. She concluded that he had really forgotten her; he *must* have forgotten her, or his feelings must have changed almost miraculously, or surely he could not be so happy among her people without her. Pauline remembered the photograph on her mother's work-table, and wondered if he ever looked at it. Thus she teased herself and scolded herself, and waited in puzzled suspense. Then one day there came a letter from Kitty, full of lamentations over his going away. He had left them the day before, and they all missed him so much; but he was obliged to go back to France. Kitty and Philip had never thought they could have liked a Frenchman.

Very well; this was the end. Pauline was now filled with disgust and shame at having allowed herself to think of him at all. She now determined to put him out of her thoughts at once and for ever, and evidently the best way of doing this was to plunge herself into other interests. There must be no more thinking. A violent course of gaiety would have been the best antidote; but this was not to be had at Croome; she must therefore make the most of such small excitements as presented themselves.

She went out that afternoon, with a heart-ache which she would not acknowledge to herself, and which had the outward effect of flushing her cheeks with lovely colour, and giving a blue deep look to her eyes.

'How pretty you are to-day, child!' said Miss Mowbray, meeting her in the garden.

'Am I? I thought you didn't like this hat,' said Pauline, kissing her.

'The hat doesn't seem to matter.'

She left her aunt among the flowers, and walked restlessly away, up into the rocky lanes and across high fields, where lambs were playing in the fresh spring weather. She was going to try and collect a few girls for that class, which seemed a possible distraction. She hardly knew what she was going to teach them, and neither Aunt Lucia nor Ben was likely to help her. Being intellectually lazy, she had put off this consideration for the present: one must find out first what they knew. Ben had been discouraging, though she did not mind him much at the time.

'Religion! explaining the Bible!' he had said, with a good-humoured smile. 'Do you understand it yourself? Better teach them to sew and knit, and darn the boys' socks.'

'O, of course, anything to make them useful to the boys,' she had answered, laughing; but she did not at all intend to take his advice.

Her class was to be much more lively and interesting than he imagined. Besides, though she did not tell the Rector so, sewing and knitting and darning were not such very familiar industries to her.

She walked on till the fields opened out on a disused quarry; the stones lay about, half covered with moss, and a wild little stream dashed down amongst them, hurrying past the steep bank of a cottage-garden, where a row of nut-trees hung over the water. The cottage was large, thatched, and roughly built of refuse stones from the quarry; its roof was overgrown with house-leek, its walls were yellow with lichen, and in every cranny some weed or little fern was growing; so that they were like natural rocks, picturesque and

rugged. One had to cross the stream by a narrow plank, which led to the stony path up to the door. A small dog came out, and barked fiercely. Pauline, however, made her way past these obstacles, and reached the door, which was standing half open. Seeing that there were people in the kitchen, she knocked quite gently; a middle-aged woman, worn and gray, with tears on her face, stepped softly across the stone floor to let her in.

'Sit ye down, miss,' she whispered.

There was such a strange hush over the kitchen that Pauline was startled, and hardly liked to speak. In the large low room, with its immense chimney, five or six women were sitting, young and old; among them one very old woman, the grandmother, in a high armchair by the fire, and the two girls of whom Pauline was in search. Their mother and a couple of neighbours made up the number. One of the girls had a fine earnest face, and hardly turned her sad dark eyes towards the bright vision of the young lady coming in; the other was pretty and vacant-looking, and quite ready to stare. Pauline sat down silently in the chair that was set for her, and after a moment understood what was going on.

A few days before, Mr. Dunstan had asked her aunt to send some help to these people; the father had been for some time ill and out of work; they were very poor, and too proud to beg for themselves. The request on Mr. Dunstan's part was so unusual, and his interest in the people was so evident, that Miss Mowbray asked for a little more explanation. She found that the man was an infidel; that he had once attended some infidel and Communist lectures in London, and

since then had preached his opinions a good deal among his neighbours at Croome.

'And I am to waste my charity on an unbelieving wretch like that!' cried Miss Mowbray.

'I want your help in making a Christian of him,' said Ben gravely. 'Example is better than precept; you may have heard that before.'

'After all, it is such a rare pleasure to hear you ask for anything, or confess that you have any work to do at Croome—I suppose I must encourage your infidel,' said his patroness lightly.

Pauline remembered all this, as she sat down among the women and heard Ben Dunstan's voice in an inner room, of which the door was standing open. He was talking; he and his parishioner were in the midst of a long argument on Christianity. The sick man's remarks and answers were like faint growls in the distance, but Ben, though he did not speak loud, spoke very clearly, and the listeners in the kitchen did not lose a word of what he was saying.

Pauline was a little bored at first, by finding herself thus hindered in her mission; but she could not help listening like the others, and very soon she found herself as deeply interested as they were. She knew nothing of the hollow clap-trap arguments which Ben was so easily defeating; they had not been dinned into her ears by profanity, ignorance, and stupidity for many months past, as they had been into the ears of these poor women; thus it was not the talk itself, though strange and new to her, that she found so interesting. It was the things which Ben said, and the way in which he said them. He did not preach, he talked; he used all kinds of original illustrations, the quaintness of some of them mak-

ing Pauline quite sure that they came out of his own head. Sometimes she felt inclined to smile, but among those grave faces this seemed impossible. And their gravity, after all, touched an answering chord in her heart. Yes; Ben was worth listening to; there was a strong earnest conviction in every word he said; a firmness, a fine quiet faith that could be shaken by nothing. He knew that good must triumph; that this man must believe in time; and he did not talk to him as an enemy, but as a brother who, by some strange misfortune, had lost sight of his father and his home.

As the talk went on, the sick man's replies grew fainter, and Ben's voice grew lower and more tender, and full of sympathy. The women in the other room nodded their heads and wiped their eyes; the elder girl sat in unchanged gravity; the younger one kept gazing dreamily at Pauline, who was looking at the door. Presently there was a silence, and Ben came and shut the door, without seeing who was in the kitchen. Still Pauline felt that she must wait till he was gone, for these people seemed full of their own thoughts, and of what was going on in the next room. She waited, therefore, sitting still; the younger girl got up yawning, and went out into the garden; her mother sent a reproachful look after her.

In a few minutes Ben came out of the room, shutting the door after him.

'I shall be here again to-morrow, Mrs. Lyne,' he said.

'God bless you, sir!' said the mother.

At that moment Ben saw Pauline, who got up from her chair in the shadow.

'You here?' he said; and the

sturdy Rector flushed a little. 'Have you been here long?'

'A little time,' said Pauline. 'I came to talk about—to tell Mrs. Lyne about the class, you know.'

'That is Mary's business,' said the Rector; and the dark-eyed girl looked up wonderingly. 'But you can't talk to her now, for her father wants her. I think you had better come another day.'

'Very well; yes, I will,' said Pauline. And so Ben took her away with him from the cottage, over the plank, down the rough quarry road, and across the upland fields.

'Were you there all the time?' he said presently.

'Most of it. I heard you talking. I suppose you did not hear me come in?'

'No, I must confess I did not. I'm afraid that poor chap will die,' said Ben.

'Still, you are not very unhappy about him, are you?' said Pauline. 'At least, I am sure you are doing all you can for him.'

'It rouses one when a fellow is such a fool as to deny everything,' he said, looking at her with a slight smile. 'You hardly know what you are saying sometimes. I wish I had known you were there—and yet I'm glad I didn't.'

'It would not have made any difference to you,' said Pauline. 'You meant all that, and you said it all. I am very glad I was there, and heard it. It taught me something too.'

'Why, you don't mean to say that such thoughts ever plague you?' said Ben. 'I know what they are by experience. I worked them off at Forest Moor.'

'Have I soul enough, do you think, to be troubled in that way?'

'Don't talk like your aunt,'

said Ben. 'Seriously, though—my argument with Lyne—what did it teach you?'

'I shall not tell you that,' she answered gently.

She could not exactly say, 'It taught me how good and how clever you are.'

But this little adventure, this hearing him at his best, when he did not know that any educated ears were listening, had really a great effect upon her. It influenced her after life, as such discoveries do; accidental, we call them, if anything is an accident. Pauline had many faults, some of them not of a high kind; but she had what is a redeeming point in any character, a strong faculty of admiration. She could look up; she could admire power and talent and goodness; she was not at all exclusively employed in admiring herself, like some girls with beautiful faces. Poor Pauline! She talked to Ben brightly and gently enough, as they walked over the fields together. She was restless and unhappy and angry at heart, but no one would have found this out from her manner. Ben thought she had never been so charming. He was beginning to despise himself for being afraid of the Frenchman; the facts, which he had heard from Miss Mowbray, of Gérard's staying at Sandridge, of his going back to France, had been a source of comfort to him; and to-day Pauline's sweetness, with her lovely looks—he had not seen her look so pretty for months, if ever before—filled the excellent Ben with a brave excitement. He believed she liked him, and he was afraid of nobody.

They came down the slope of the fields, and reached a stream that ran in the hollow, below the church and rectory. Looking over its low gray parapet half covered with reddish ivy, through

a gap in the willows that shaded it, whose catkins were just breaking into fresh green leaf, they could see the old red chimneys of the Court, far away along the meadows. This was the same small river that turned the mill; its next bridge above was close to the Court gates, and its clear brown current came singing down from Aunt Lucia to them as they stood on the rough pathway and looked up the stream.

'You know that Miss Mowbray is going to leave all this to me?' said Ben suddenly.

'Yes, she told me. I am very glad,' answered Pauline.

'Do you suppose everybody knows?'

'O no, I don't think so. Nobody, I believe, except Mr. Johnson and I.'

'It is best that they should not, for of course she may change her mind. Sometimes I wish she would, for I don't know what I shall do with it all. However, that is a long way off,' said Ben, comforting himself. 'She thinks I am the right person, but I don't agree with her. I warned her last summer how it would be—that I should let or sell the place, and go back to the north, most likely.'

'Let or sell that dear old house?' said Pauline, looking at him reproachfully. 'O, you don't mean it! Why do you tease her by saying things you don't mean?'

'She doesn't care what I say,' said Ben. 'And, besides, she is more likely to live to ninety than I to fifty. You may think I am talking a great deal about myself, but sometimes I wish she had never heard of me. I should have got on somehow, and it is bad to spend one's life in slavery to a house and some acres of ground, which people tell you is old and dear, and think you a cold-hearted

brute if you talk of selling. Yes, I sometimes wish I had never seen her, or Croome—'

'Never seen Aunt Lucia?' murmured Pauline rather faintly, for there was something odd in his voice. 'Well, then, you could never have talked to that man just now.'

'O, he wouldn't have been left alone. Somebody else would have looked after him. What I'm doing for him is not worth all—Do you know what I'm thinking about?' said Ben, leaning against the parapet, and looking into her face. 'Is it still hopeless? I would do what you pleased about living here, and everything else, if only you would—if you would make life worth living at all. Don't you know, dear?' he said, his voice trembling very much.

Pauline did not speak; she did not turn away, but stood with lowered eyelids, looking at the stream. She remembered that day in the autumn very well—the thunderstorm, Ben's abruptness, from which she had shrunk away with no feeling but a wish to escape, and something very near dislike of him. It seemed to her that everything was changed now. She knew Ben so much better, it seemed to her; but at any rate she knew how gentle and generous and patient he could be—no, she had not quite found him out yet—and he was good and clever and sincere; and to her, a lonely creature with no prospects in the world, he could offer a great deal. She felt her influence over him, though she had never used it seriously. She knew very well that his whole heart and being was taken up with her; she confessed to herself that it would be pleasant to bring all doubt and torment to an end, to have a fixed and peaceful fate, to be loved and spoiled and de-

fended by some one, if it was only Ben Dunstan; to have the Court for her home, to do all sorts of things for her father and mother and the children. Surely these were strong arguments in favour of Ben, and yet why were they all so sad, so mixed with heartache?

'That is only the unsettled feeling,' Pauline thought. 'He is so good, it will soon go away.'

'Don't you think I have been patient enough?' said Ben, who had been watching her all this time, keeping a strong restraint upon himself, and wishing he was clever enough to read the thoughts in a woman's face.

Pauline came back from the land of dreams, and gave him a quick glance.

'I told you to forget,' she said, 'and you promised that you would.'

'Never!' said Ben. 'One doesn't promise what is impossible. Listen. I've loved you ever since I knew you. I have only stayed here because I could not bear to go away from you, though sometimes I thought it would be the best way; but I couldn't do it. But, dear, do you hate me quite as much as you did?'

'I never hated you,' said Pauline rather sadly.

She was gazing down the stream again, and Ben dared not feel very sure yet.

'It was very like it,' he said; 'but if you don't now, that's good for me. Will you trust me, then?'

'I do trust you,' said Pauline, in a low voice. 'I think you are very good, and I am not half good enough for you.'

'There you are mistaken; but it doesn't matter,' said Ben.

It was strange how something still held him back. Pauline had made no sign of refusing him; he knew, though he could not understand it, that a wonderful change

had come over everything, that the happiness of his life was quietly giving itself to him; and yet somehow he was as much puzzled as a child would be if the moon came to him when he wanted her. Pauline was so calm, so cold, so sad, though she smiled as she spoke to him. All the excitement was on Ben's side; and this quiet girl kept him at a distance, and would not let him feel that she belonged to him.

'My darling, do you really mean that I may have you?' he said; and he came up close to her, and took her hand.

She looked straight into his eyes for one moment, and then drew herself away with a slight shiver.

'Let me speak,' she said. 'I don't know what I mean. Please let me go home now.'

'You shall do as you like,' said Ben, stepping back, and letting her hand go. He had quite as much pride as more ornamental people. 'Tell me, though—may I come this evening?'

'O no; not this evening.'

'To-morrow, then?'

'I don't know; I want to think. You must not hurry me too much.'

'Very well,' said Ben. 'I will obey your orders, whatever they are; only be kind, and don't keep me waiting too long.'

'If—you must let me tell Aunt Lucia when I like; you must not tell her.'

'Just as you please,' said Ben. 'It cannot matter which of us tells her. She will be glad, I think. Pauline, dear—'

He could hardly bear to let her go without something more than this—even a word to tell him that she cared for him, or at least that she was glad he cared for her. But he was not to have it; for a noise of wheels was coming along

the lane, approaching the bridge, and Pauline walked quickly away to the other end of it, where a path led through the meadows to the mill, and so into the Court garden. Ben went after her, and opened the gate for her. He was going to follow her through; but she shook her head, smiling, and would not let him come.

'No, please—don't come with me,' she said. 'Good-bye.'

He did not wait to watch her as she hurried away under the willows, but walked off along the lane, with bright thoughtful eyes, looking straight before him. The farmer in his cart, who overtook him directly afterwards, and said something about the weather, went home and told his wife that Mr. Dunstan looked as cheerful as if he was going to be married.

(To be continued.)

CHESTNUTS.

CHESTNUTS falling on the ground,
Prickly chestnuts, all around;
Chestnuts, as they tumble down,
Bursting, and all ripe and brown,
Peeping from their cosy places,
In their green and dainty cases.

And the chestnuts seem to whisper
Unto me, a musing listener,
Of the sweet times long departed;
When, all young and happy-hearted,
Round the dear old schoolroom fender,
We the chestnuts roasted tender.

O the wrangling o'er our wrongs,
When too long one held the tongs!
O the faces flushed and hot,
Scents of singeing heeded not!
And the number, O how small,
Of fruit 'fit to eat at all!

Sometimes still, when daylight grays,
All alone beside the blaze,
To recall the times loved most,
I have chestnuts placed to roast.
But, while watching them, I dream
Of those slumbering ones, and seem
Almost to behold them near—
Almost each dear voice to hear;
Till I start, and all expire—
Voices, chestnuts, dreams, and fire!

J. G. GRESHAM.

IN MILFORD SOUND.

NOTHING to do with Wales whatever, though it is to a mountainous ocean-girt shore that I invite your attention. Without doubt some original 'Taffy' baptised the hills and dales of this locality in the southern hemisphere, testifying thereby a due respect for the mother country. Pembroke Peak, Lawrenny, Milford, and many other landmarks, assert a familiar acquaintance with a Welsh district. Yet can no exaggerated affection have persuaded the obtusest 'Taffy's' mind that aught within the compass of British seas approaches in grandeur the mountains and fiords of Otago. If there remains anything fresh in the way of scenery to be discovered or seen on this well-tracked sphere, it is probable that New Zealand will afford it. Let he who declares there is nothing new under the sun take heart of grace. Here is a country having the right to lay claim to an original construction of mountain, fell, cliff, and forest. The wrinkles of civilisation have not, moreover, marred its youthful beauty, so that it appears somewhat fresher than the rest of the world.

The volcanic nature of a large space in the northern island sets it apart as of peculiar interest to the scientifically-minded. Probably in prehistoric ages a much larger extent of territory was subject to subterranean fire, but in these days all that remains of volcanic nature (the marvels of hot springs, terraces, and lakes) more than satisfies the wonder of diligent globe-trotters who come to see it. The southern island

does, in reality, boast a more bold and magnificent scenery, but travellers in quest of the marvellous naturally overlook the sublime. As a country for sightseers equal to roughing it, New Zealand offers endless resources of the wonderful and beautiful to draw upon. Exploration now reaches accessible points within an easy distance of the coast, where roads are made or bridle-paths are traversible; but the ordinary traveller, not under the experienced guidance of some dweller in the land, will probably leave the country ignorant of some of its finest features. Inland settlers, entitled to sing of its glory, tell of untrodden valleys, unknown lakes, trackless forests, and bridgeless rivers of surprising beauty, which, in the obscurity of mountain shadows, are almost unexplored.

On the south-east coast of Otago, the southern province of the South Island, there is a large extent of land cut up by numerous fiords, or deep-sea sounds, which run up to the base of lofty mountains. New enterprises open out their wonders and sublimity year by year. One of these mysterious recesses has been lately discovered to abound in marble of a very fine kind, and surveyors and geologists are now not infrequent visitors to the locality. When Macaulay's New Zealander sits on London Bridge, perhaps Caswell marble may have a world-wide fame.

Many of the narrow passages which form the fiords are inaccessible from the land, being enclosed

by precipitous rocks. The sounds can, however, be reached in fine weather by coasting steamers, which call in at them for the gratification of passengers. During a couple of summer months there are also special excursion steamers which run round the island, anchoring successively in every inlet of interest, and affording artists and photographers grand opportunities of representing the singular beauty of their aspect. On a passage from Melbourne to Christchurch I had the good luck to penetrate two of these extraordinary sounds under exceptional circumstances. Those who have visited this locality have almost invariably done so in calm weather, and with the sunshine modifying the terrific grandeur of Milford Sound—an inlet so weird, so majestic in its gloom, that it can compare with no other; but I was privileged to visit it when in a stormy mood. Colonials are a moving population. They travel all they can, instinctively, like the Americans. Where purse considerations admit of it the original nomadic inspiration is diligently followed. Few business men at the antipodes consider themselves justified in having good health without the inspiring tonic of some annual jaunt. Many of our passengers from Australia and Tasmania had visited New Zealand before, but none amongst the number had explored any of the much-famed sounds. Expectations of something grand and exceptional in this magic territory had been fed by various guide-books and the assurances of our captain that we should look upon an unequalled scenery. Sceptical smiles would break forth covertly on the faces of those who had perambulated Europe, Asia, Africa, and America. A wide margin was left for colo-

nial boasting, inasmuch as the blow-oratory of the country whence we had come was still ringing in our ears.

The day that preceded our first sight of New Zealand's shores was bright, but considerably colder than before. We were informed that the land breeze assailing us so bitterly came direct from the snow-peaks of Mount Cook and its battalion of inferiors. Towards evening certain ominous-looking clouds drooped dark banners over the horizon, and the sun went down beneath the waves encompassed with blue-black ridges. As it dipped into the sea it shot up for a moment a pale yellow smile, which seemed almost derisive.

The fatality of rain on the morrow was un contemplated by any of us. However, during the night we were clearly given to understand that the waves were being lashed into fury by some hostile influence. Much tossing about in our bunks proclaimed the stormy wind arising. Friendly counsel had enjoined us to turn out at an early hour to witness the approach to land and the spectacle of snow-capped mountains at a distance, and we were conscientious sightseers.

Eight bells! Was it only midnight, or could it be already four o'clock? I was not left long to doubt. Darkness reigned supreme, but the sound of hurrying feet on the deck above proclaimed that the hour had come. The voice of a cabin steward, sounding through the darkness 'Four o'clock!' left no further room for hope. With a resolute determination to lose no inch of the picturesque grandeur so confidently promised, I rolled out of my berth. After much involuntary plunging about and vain gropings for articles of clothing gone astray, all

lingering inclinations for sleep were banished. The self-indulgent slumberers who shared my cabin were compassionated from a platform of superiority. My stoical conduct did not, however, meet with its just reward, and the ridicule of less eager associates, some three hours later, scarcely compensated for vigorous efforts to disestablish natural inclinations. At five o'clock the scene on deck was past all measure dreary. Some dozen men were congregated at the top of the companion, like a party of disconsolate poultry seeking shelter. Dejected feathers were well replaced by sodden ulsters. They had their gaze turned landwards, but hope was not pictured in the roundest eyes which strove to pierce the clouds of mist. Solitary individuals, of weak good-nature, driven from this quarter by the pressure in the rear, stood about on isolated dry spots on the deck, with rain dripping from their mackintoshes and making little trickling streams from beards and moustaches. The driving dampness was not to be defeated by any protective measures. It swept round us, running in streams along the deck, making cataracts between the lacings of the awnings, and penetrating with the invincible sticky nature of ocean rain to the very marrow of our bones. The wind blew it here, there, and everywhere. There was indeed no leaside to our misfortunes, for the waves tumbled turbulently over each other, their lofty crests appearing to defy our approach to the land. An untenanted oasis of comparative dryness on a bench persuaded me to venture on to the deck. Resolving to sit out the mournful hours of the early day sooner than own to a defeated purpose, I took up my position. Encompassed with

a mighty ulster, a mackintosh above and a rug beneath it, defensive measures were as complete as circumstances admitted. At six o'clock, when compassionate stewards visited the shivering humanity above-stairs with cups of steaming coffee, things looked a degree brighter. Every now and again the dense clouds lifted for a moment, revealing our nearness to the land. The outline of high hills, towering above us, would become visible as the mists rolled away, and rocks, shrubs, and streams were discernible realities. Such tantalising glimpses of a grand coast-line prolonged our patience till the breakfast-gong sounded. The damped spirits of the hopeful ones rose magically under the influence of a hearty meal. Subsequently, on deck, recruits were persuaded to join the faithful lovers of scenery. Thus the wet forenoon was wiled away by spectral hopes. The occasional breaks in the clouds, with the subsiding of the wind, seemed to promise a final entry into the sound. For some hours we had been going at half-speed, creeping up the coast in a careful and leisurely fashion. At twelve o'clock the rumour was set afloat that Milford was at hand. The rain had by no means ceased, but it had become more endurable as it increased in violence and decision. For three hours the torrent had continued to flow with unabated vigour. The indefinite veils of driving mist had, however, been more disastrous to our hopes than this steady downpour. The mountains and rocks were clearer to view, and landmarks easily recognised.

Field-glasses were in great request when lofty peaks were seen looming through the heavy atmosphere. A long tongue of low rocks, covered closely by low-

growing shrubs of a livid green, jutted out from the mainland ahead of us. Round this barrier we knew we had to go. At last we drew near to the gloomy portal of what looked like some infernal lake. It seemed that we were courting a certain destruction as our steamer, obedient to the helm, turned its head to this entrance. The narrow gateway before us was so dark and frowning that the very waves were hushed and still before it. The raving wind was silent beneath the shadows, and a solemn stillness appeared to hover in the air. The effect of this sudden calm beneath the huge rocks was astonishing. It almost seemed that the disordered elements obeyed some majestic voice, breathing a 'Peace, be still!'

On either side of us precipitous rocks, like sentinel pillars, rose out of unfathomable depths of water—water so black that it refused to mirror them. These wardens of an everlasting silence within the gates seemed to threaten us with instant extinction as we approached them. The grim and surly mountains, whose stony faces were wrinkled with the furrows of a thousand cataracts, scowled at our forwardness. The tale of centuries was written in a terrible handwriting on these solemn guards. How and when they had been rent asunder we could not guess. What terrific force had sliced and parted the mountains, Nature did not tell; now between them there was a great gulf fixed, and our temerity mocked their power to check us.

It seemed almost a desecration to disturb the glassy surface of the deep black water. The sombre pomp of majestic rocks, cold and gray, like iron plates rising thousands of feet above us, rebuked our trespass in all the dignity of

a terrible silence. As we passed within the entrance, a cannon was fired off to awaken the echoes of the rocky steep. The artillery of a thousand field-pieces was given back to us from the surrounding heights; the mountains, making a mock of our impotence, catching up our feeble challenge, and reëchoing our puny endeavour far and wide in a thousand reverberations. As we crept onwards, hugging the northern precipice within a few yards of perilous slabs of rock, rising without any incline out of deep water, we held our breath in awe-stricken amazement. The inclination to cry out, 'The rocks will fall on us, the mountains will cover us!' was almost irresistible. All this time the clouds dropped rain with steady persistence, swelling the countless cataracts, and compelling them to madder haste. We were most of us standing on the high deck, unsheltered by any awning, and unmindful of umbrellas. The majesty of our prison overwhelmed all other considerations but those of awe and wonder. The sound of the tempest without was forgotten, and even human voices and sights passed away from our recollection. We had only eyes for the marvellous stupendous creation. Five and six thousand feet of rock and mountain towering above us looked as though some Cyclopean architect had gathered his forces together to reach the skies. Occasionally the rocks retired, and opened in some narrow chasm, whose awful gloom our dim sight could not penetrate. One slab of rock, some two thousand feet high, is worn smooth by the lattice-work of countless waterfalls, torrents which are white as snow. The rain has given them new vigour, and they foam furiously in their impetuous efforts to reach the depths below.

The swish of all this rushing water breaks the silence at last. These straight walls were not rent to make a nursing home for vegetation, though on the face of some of them a thin scrub persistently ekes out a poor liveliness. In isolated spots shrubs take hold of some piece of earth which has been washed down by some torrent from above, while lower down struggling ferns find a temporary foothold.

The shadows are almost perpetual; here and there are recesses which no stray sunbeams ever penetrate. The gray rocks must always be dull and cold; their gloom never alters, their grayness can never see a false image in any blue dancing waters. This Sound is like some dolorous place of enchantment, where silence is the gaoler and darkness the torturer. Gustave Doré's weirdest fancies could not exceed these oppressive mountains, these threatening rocks.

Slowly we wind along, marking well the buttresses and bulwarks of the mountains, fortifications which may defy the hand of time. The rain has stopped at last; but still the loftier pinnacles of snow-clad hills do not unveil. Perhaps, if they could be seen, the weight of the prison-roof would no longer be a sensation; but beneath these leaden skies we are captives, and escape is impossible. As we near the end of the fiord, the rivulets and cataracts increase mightily, flowing with wilder leaps and throbs from the full arteries of the mountains, and feeding the blackness of the waters with noisy vehemence.

The Bowen Fall, now expanded to a tumultuous torrent, provokes a burst of loudly-expressed surprise as we come in sight. The aspect of this mighty cataract gives us back the power of speech.

A hundred feet or so below its first leap into air, a projecting rock essays to check its freedom; but the incensed stream is not to be stayed, denying the power of any stone to limit its liberty. With a yet more daring leap it escapes once more, falling three hundred feet below, where it is swallowed up in the black waters of the Sound. In its death it is glorious, for in its last flight it radiates light in the gloom. A dense cloud of whitest vapour rising high in the air spreads over the water, enveloping the escape from the prison-house in a shroud of mist and spray. The roar of the glorious fall is deafening as we come closer, and we shout at one another our expressions of admiration. The exorcism of our great awe is removed; if the waters escape the rocks, so may we.

At last we are at the limit of our expedition, still closely hemmed in by the ruthless walls. It seems that we have no longer space sufficient to turn in. Yet we do turn. Another flash from our small cannon, a farewell salute of homage, perhaps. The *feu de joie* which follows declares the echoes to be conscious of our presence. Our ears are assailed by a succession of replies. The answering detonations begin close above us, then a whole battery reverberates acknowledgment, till finally the outermost bastion salutes afar off.

We turn and creep down the south shore, beneath the same overhanging ramparts and towers of strength, till we reach the iron gates once more. The rocks have not fallen at the entrance, the sentinels do not bar our departure—we pass—we are free on the wide ocean once more. The rain has ceased, and the sun is making an effort to break through

the clouds. We make at full speed for George Sound, in order to enter it before dusk. At about five o'clock, when the rays of the sun are slanting upwards and gilding the crests of the mountains, we pass into a smiling roadstead, bordered by gently sloping hills dressed in the most exquisite verdure. The floods are clapping their hands, and the hills are joyful together here. It is a scene of fairy enchantment, and as a contrast to the overwhelming grandeur of our past experiences we welcome the lovely vegetation and gentle declivities. The watery valley open before us winds like a broad river between intersecting chains of hills, green with the most glossy-leaved shrubs, feathery fern-trees, and fringed down to the water's edge with trailing creepers. The sinking sun crowns each hill-top with light, which is reflected again in the smooth water beneath us. Graceful plants twine above each little stream and rill, which leisurely stirs the deep carpets of moss. No wild cataracts, frantic to escape the cold embrace of the mountains, hurl themselves into the flood here. There are gleeful sportive water-courses, laughing and singing softly as they wind about the spurs of the hills which gave them birth. The enchanting form of the rounded hills, with here and there a boulder standing on some knoll or plateau, and far above us upright slabs of stone perched on lofty peaks, like ruined castles, is beyond description. One soft undulation backs up another with gracious condescension, till the last one retires to some pinnacle touching the sky. Nature is in her most radiant and festive mood. The raindrops still glisten on the shining leaves of trees and shrubs, but the sun has turned

them all to diamonds. Ravishing effects of light and shade are obtained in nooks and corners, ravines and gullies, undecorated by human footsteps. The sound of an axe has never been here, and all decay and death is covered up promptly in natural graveclothes. Vivid red creepers fling aloft their shielding arms over decayed shrubs, drooping ferns decorate fallen trees, verdant plumes nod over aught that is unsightly, and diamond-hung fringes skirt the feet of the mountains. As we proceed, tantalising valleys open away from us, affording glimpses of fairy-like dells, secluded bowers of fern-tapestried enchantment. We follow a winding course, which makes each successive hill a stranger to its neighbour, and finally, as the sun slowly sinks, we reach a circular lake at the head of the Sound. Here we get glimpses of snow-capped peaks and veins of pure whiteness frozen on stony mountain-sides. These stern ranges in the background enhance the rich beauty of the nearer hills, while the soft light of dying day sheds its peace over another large waterfall. This one flows sedately from its birth-place, fed continually by snows from above. The effulgence of the saffron-stained sky is slowly fading; the long shadows on the water, softly rippled by the ministering cataract, are growing darker, and the mountains one by one veil their heads. The sky receding, ever more 'serene and far,' as the night draws on, sends forth its starry messengers to hasten our departure. A moon creeps gently upwards from the east, and as we glide over the water's calm surface, once more making for the open sea, our only regret is that we cannot linger longer in so fair a scene. H.K.

THREE WIZARDS AND A WITCH.

BY MRS. J. H. RIDDELL, AUTHOR OF 'THE SENIOR PARTNER,'
'GEORGE GEITH OF FEN COURT,' ETC.

CHAPTER XXV.

WITHOUT FOILS.

THERE ensued an awkward silence. The one man did not want to speak—the other would not.

At length the spell was broken by Mr. Gayre, who said, without looking at his visitor, and as if his words were merely the outcome of a long course of exhaustive reasoning,

'You see, some one must criminate himself.'

Mr. Fife laughed. 'You don't trap me that way,' he answered.

'Believe me, I had no intention of trapping you. I was only stating a fact.'

'O, of course. I quite understand that.'

'If we are to discuss the matter at all, Mr. Fife, permit me to suggest you must do so in a different spirit.'

'I don't know,' answered Mr. Fife, 'that I feel disposed to discuss the affair further. In effect, there is nothing to discuss. I have told you plainly, Dane is innocent, and that I can prove his innocence. I have told you I want to be paid for my information, and the price I expect from *some one*. It does not much signify to *me* who pays that money, but I should imagine it signified a great deal to *you*.'

Mr. Gayre winced. The man's tone, the man's manner, seemed terrible to him. He had never been spoken to with such offen-

sive familiarity before, even by his equals; and as he shot a glance aside at Mr. Fife, and remembered the former cringing deference of his address, it came home to his mind more fully than ever that he was wading through very dirty water indeed, and that he had better get out of it as soon as possible.

'I think,' he said, 'I would rather wash my hands of the whole business.'

'Just as you like. I suppose, however, you have fully considered what washing your hands, as you call it, exactly means?'

'I fear I scarcely follow you.'

Mr. Gayre's voice was freezing in its cold respectability.

'I don't believe you do. Now, listen. No, you needn't look so indignant. I mean no offence. Remember, you are not in Lombard Street now; and if you were, I want nothing out of your strong room except a sum of money, for which I am willing and anxious to give you full value. We're man and man at this minute, sir. I'm not Samuel Fife, manager at Colvend & Surlees; and you're not Nicholas Gayre, banker. We're equals, that's what we are—equals. If there is any disparity in our respective positions, the turn of the scale is in my favour, for I have something you want to buy, and that you can't buy from anybody but me.'

During the delivery of this ad-

dress, Mr. Gayre faced the speaker in amazement. As he did so, it dawned upon him that though Mr. Fife was not drunk, he had, according to his own simple vocabulary, been 'priming himself.'

Had Sir Geoffrey been present, he would have read the 'abandoned miscreant' a lecture concerning the wickedness of persons imbibing who 'could not carry their liquor decently;' but Mr. Gayre, though utterly abstemious, did not feel himself such a saint that he dare adventure upon any argument concerning the sinfulness of Mr. Samuel Fife.

Instead of entering into that question, he remarked,

'I do not know that I want to buy anything.'

'Well,' said Mr. Fife, nowise disconcerted by a statement meant to be crushing, 'you had better know whether you do or not during the course of the next fifteen minutes. Time is getting on. It now'—and Mr. Fife produced a white-faced silver watch—'wants exactly five minutes to nine o'clock. If by ten minutes past nine o'clock you, Miss Drummond's friend, have failed to decide what you are going to do, I shall not trouble you further. There,' added Messrs. Colvend & Surlees' manager, in beautiful continuation, at the same moment laying his silver watch and steel chain on a table at Mr. Gayre's elbow, 'is the time—Post-office.'

'In the name of Heaven,' cried poor baited Mr. Gayre, 'why should you suppose all this concerns me?'

'Better invoke the name of the Deity, sir,' suggested the unwelcome visitor, with bibulous solemnity; 'in that case I should answer, with no beating about the bush, I suppose all this concerns you greatly. You're in love with the girl—that's what it

comes to. If you can lay your hand on your heart and say honestly you are not, why, the sooner I go to Miss Drummond the better. She'll pay me my price, I know.'

'If you are so sure of that, why do you trouble me? why did you not go to her direct?'

'There are wheels within wheels,' replied Mr. Fife loftily. 'I have my reasons, which I do not intend to tell you—not yet, at all events—perhaps never. Now, Mr. Gayre, are you making up your mind, because I am determined to settle the matter one way or other before I sleep?'

'I have made up my mind on one point,' said the gentleman so peremptorily addressed, 'namely, that I will not pay one sixpence till you furnish me with some proof you really do possess the knowledge you profess.'

'That is fair enough; but on the other part, I do not show my hand without something binding on your side. Give me the merest scrap of writing as evidence of your *bona-fides*, and I'll tell you what I know.'

'But what you know, or think you know, may turn out practically valueless.'

'Upon my soul, I believe you do not want the fellow proved innocent. I think if his release rested with you he might stop in gaol for ever—not there before you would lift a finger to get him out!'

'I trust you wrong me, Mr. Fife. At any rate, you must allow me to observe your own anxiety on the subject is not so disinterested you have any right to attribute such ungenerous feelings to me.'

'Pooh!' retorted Mr. Fife; 'that is all very fine, but we both know more of the world than to believe much in generosity or disinter-

estedness, or any such humbug. What you are afraid of now is, that when Dane appears once more on the scene, Miss Drummond won't marry you. Neither she will, if I tell her. She will marry Dane,—him! But make a fair bargain with me, and the game is in your own hands. "Take me," you can say, "when I obtain your lover's release; refuse me, and my gentleman remains at Portland for the term to which he was sentenced."

'What a scoundrel you are, Mr. Fife!'

'I am not a hypocrite, at any rate. And why should the girl not marry you? She will have everything money can buy, except a conceited empty-headed puppy without a sixpence to bless himself with. And she deserves a better fate; for, though I don't care much for that style myself, she is good-looking, and has as nice manners—I'll say that for her—as any woman I ever spoke to.'

'Have you spoken to her?' The amazement in Mr. Gayre's tone was not complimentary.

'Rather! I lodge in the same house: if I take a thing in hand I do it thoroughly; and I wanted to make sure of my ground before I came to you. There has been nothing more than "Good-morning," or "Good-evening," or "It's cloudy," or "What a wet day we have had!" but it was enough. Her voice is soft, and her ways sweet. She'll make you a very suitable wife; and though, to be sure, you are not young, I daresay you'll make her a very good husband.'

'Mr. Fife, you shall hold no further communication with this most faithful and unfortunate lady!' declared Mr. Gayre, rising in hot wrath. 'If only to save her from the degradation of hearing you mention her lover's

name in her presence, I will pay the exorbitant sum you exact as the price of your shameful secret.'

'Come, that's to the point at last. Hard words break no bones, and it is perfectly immaterial to me why you find the money, so long as you do find it. If you have a piece of paper handy, just write that, upon my proving the fact of Oliver Dane's innocence to your satisfaction—'

'You must do more than that,' interrupted Mr. Gayre.

'Well, word it any way in reason you like. I'll give you the key, but you must do the rest yourself, remember. Say, when Samuel Fife has given you the means of proving Oliver Dane's innocence to the satisfaction of Messrs. Colvend & Surlees, you will hand him over an open cheque—'

'I will give you a bank-note; I wouldn't write your name on a cheque.'

'Dear me! but it is of no consequence; a note will do just as well. Now, if you put that into form, and sign it (I'll not ask for a witness—I don't believe you will try to shuffle out of your bargain), we can get to business—'

'I almost wish I had not passed my word.'

'Ah! but you have, you know; and besides, though you may choose to break your promise, I shan't break mine. Make any further objections, and I see Miss Drummond before I sleep.'

Chafing with anger, more thoroughly furious perhaps than he had ever felt before in his life, yet supported by the determination to do a right and unselfish action, Mr. Gayre intimated that writing materials being in his study, an adjournment had better be made to that apartment.

'It does not matter to me where

the thing is written, so long as it is written,' said Mr. Fife, with easy impudence. 'I have made up my mind for this throw, and I do not want to waste any more time before making a clean breast. You have a very fine house here,' he added, as he descended the stairs; 'but it needs one other piece of furniture, a handsome wife. You'll have that before long, though, no doubt; and I know whom you ought to thank for it;' and he laughed as he turned his head and looked at Mr. Gayre, who had much ado to refrain from kicking him to the bottom of the flight.

Something of this feeling must have shown in his face, for Mr. Fife proceeded to make a sort of apology.

'Don't mind me to-night,' he remarked. 'I'm mad; that's what I am. I'm going to cut my own throat. I mean to do that which will force me to leave Colvenda. Perhaps you would like to know why? Wait a little. That's all in the story.'

'I do not feel at all sure that I am doing right in entering into any compromise with you,' said Mr. Gayre, as, after carefully closing the library-door, he motioned Mr. Fife to a seat, and, taking a chair himself, began to write.

'That is a pity,' commented Mr. Fife, with a smile.

'Are you aware you have no stipulation with regard to your own safety?' asked Mr. Gayre.

'Yes, I am aware of that;' and his smile grew broader.

'I thought I would just mention the fact,' said the banker.

'Very kind of you. In common gratitude, I think I ought to give you a hint: don't let your young lady get an inkling of how you are going to help her lover till you have made everything

safe as regards your own marriage. If you do, she'll find a way to slip out of her agreement. They're all alike: so long as a man can give or get them something they want, they'll purr round him, and be pleasant and winning as a child looking out for sweets; but the moment he has served their turn, it's "Thanks, so many;" and the pace isn't known quick enough to their fancy, to take him out of their sight.'

Mr. Gayre ceased writing, and contemplated the speaker in astonishment.

'Your knowledge of the sex seems almost exhaustive, Mr. Fife,' he observed.

'I can't tell whether you are chaffing me or not; and I don't care,' answered that gentleman. 'There is one thing, however, I will say—that, let you know women as you may, I know them better.'

'The usual thing,' remarked Mr. Gayre. 'You generalise concerning the sex from one example.'

'Never mind what I do, but remember what I say. If you don't, you'll repent it.'

'Before I sign this paper, there is one question I fear I must ask.'

'What is it?'

'There are no other defalcations?'

'So far as I am aware—none.'

'Do you object to my embodying that statement?'

'Not in the least;' and Mr. Fife laughed outright.

'Will this do?' inquired the banker, wondering what Mr. Fife had found so amusing in his question.

'Yes, that will do; a lawyer, I daresay, could pick a few holes in it; but friends ought not to be too particular. With your

good leave, I'll just put it in my pocket-book—so. That's done,' he added, drawing a breath of relief; 'and now for my part of the pact. You conclude I forged that signature, Mr. Gayre?'

'I should not have ventured exactly to make such a suggestion, but, as you are kind enough to do so, I hope you will excuse my frankness when I answer "Yes."'

'Beyond annexing a cheque, I had nothing to do with the matter.'

'Indeed?'

'Truth, I assure you—gospel.'

'Then perhaps you will tell me who did write the name of the firm?'

'Certainly; there shall be no reservations on my part. The party—or, to speak more accurately, the lady—was christened Theodora Alberta Colvend; but she is usually called "Dossie" by a fond and foolish parent.'

'Good Heavens!' exclaimed Mr. Gayre. 'Good Heavens!'

'And "Good Heavens!" again, if you like,' said Mr. Fife; 'my information seems to surprise you, sir. If you remember, I more than hinted my knowledge of women was greater than yours.'

'But why should she? Why should any woman do such a wickedness?'

'Name the devil that eggs women on to commit any and every sin. You can't. Well, what do you say to jealousy? Miss Dossie was madly jealous of your pink and white beauty, and, as she was afraid to throw vitriol in her face, she decided to put Mr. Oliver Dane out of the way of matrimonial temptation for some time.'

'And you helped her?'

'I helped her.'

'And what possible motive could you have?'

'Ditto to Miss Dossie's. Scarce-

ly that, however; for though I did, and do, hate Mr. Oliver Dane, he might still have been walking the streets a free man so far as my enmity was concerned.'

'You wanted, then—'

'I see you are beginning to understand. I wanted Miss Dossie—that was the bargain. She promised to marry me, and, like a fool, I believed her—yes, I believed her.' And Mr. Fife broke off with a muttered oath, and something between a gulp and a gasping choking sob.

'Surely she is not worth that,' said the banker, regarding him with quite a new interest. It seemed strange that an exterior such as Mr. Fife's should cover joys, sorrows, hates, loves, precisely the same—save only, perhaps, that they were more intense—as those, for example, which dwelt within the breast of Nicholas Gayre.

'You're right enough; she's not worth it—she's not worth that!' and Mr. Fife snapped his fingers—'not worth one thought of an honest man; and before God, Mr. Gayre, I was honest in word, thought, and deed till she laid her fiendish spells upon me. However, all this has nothing to do with you; only I want you to think of me hereafter as not quite an outcast. I'll be bound now you fancy I'm going to take all that money as the mere price of what I know?'

'You ask awkward questions, Mr. Fife.'

'Never mind that; answer me truthfully, if you don't object.'

'As you press me so strongly, I am afraid I must confess the idea you have suggested has crossed my mind,' said Mr. Gayre delicately.

'Wrong again!' laughed Mr. Fife. 'Had I seen my way to earning even a hundred a year

once Colvends gave me marching orders, I'd have told you the whole story long ago with the greatest pleasure; but a man can't starve, can he?

Feeling many better men than his visitor had starved, and fearing lest even so general a statement might commit him, Mr. Gayre decided that, both in the interests of courtesy and prudence, he would be wise to hold his tongue.

'I'm taking your money on the principle of self-preservation, which, as you know, is the first law of Nature,' proceeded Mr. Fife, taking silence for consent.

'And mean to go abroad with it, no doubt?' suggested Mr. Gayre.

'I don't mean to tell either man or woman where I'm going,' answered Mr. Fife, in a sudden access of caution. 'I think I may safely say you'll see me no more; and that is about all you'll get out of me as to my future movements.'

'Certainly I had no right to make any inquiry as to your intentions; and I beg your pardon for having done so.'

'O, no offence; I'm not at all a touchy fellow. What was I talking about? O, that young jade, Miss Theodora. If you only knew—if you could only imagine—how she led me on and on and on; upon my soul, Mr. Gayre, there was a time when you might have thought she liked the ground I walked on. It was not easy to get me to do what she wanted; but there are words, looks, and tones no man with blood in his veins can resist; I could not, at any rate,' and Mr. Fife started from his chair, and took a couple of turns up and down the room before he resumed his seat.

'I am a fool,' he said—'I was a fool; for though I never in my

heart believed she cared for me, or for any created being except herself and Oliver Dane—and for him only because he would have nothing to do with her—I let myself be led by the nose till she had got her turn served.'

'Other men have been treated in the same way,' said Mr. Gayre. 'The story is as old almost as creation.'

'And when I claimed my reward,' went on Mr. Fife, unheeding this interruption, 'she laughed in my face. Since, I have wondered often I did not kill her. I wish now I had struck her down where she stood, with a mocking devil in her eyes and a sneer on her lips. "*Marry you!*" she said, "*marry you!*" That is an honour I really must decline.' And she wasn't afraid, though we were alone on Wimbledon Common, and there was not a human being but ourselves within hail. You've seen her, Mr. Gayre?

The banker nodded.

'Well, you know she looks as if a breath would blow her away. You might span her waist; I believe she is so light I could hold her on my palm stretched out like that; and Mr. Fife thrust across the table a hand of which a prize-fighter need not have been ashamed. 'Often and often I've watched her coaxing and making much of the old man, till any one might have thought there was not such an affectionate tender soul on earth. "My poor Dossie!" he would say, "my dear tender little Dossie! she's such a clinging timid darling." Clinging! timid!' repeated Mr. Fife, with wild scorn; 'I never saw the thing she was afraid of yet, except of not getting what she wanted.'

'It is strange she was not afraid of you,' observed Mr. Gayre.

'When I found she would not give me anything for love, I tried the other tack with her; but I might as well have held my peace. I said I would tell her father. "He won't believe you," was her answer. "I'll show him your letters." "The person who could forge the name of the firm could write any number of letters." "But I did not forge the name of the firm." "Ah, that you'd have to prove," she said. "Mr. Surlees would believe me even if your father did not." "He might; but you won't try to make him believe you." "Why won't I?" "Because you would lose your situation; you would not be permitted to retain it an hour."'

'The weak point, then, in your evidence is that if Miss Colvend choose to deny the statement *in toto*, you have no means of proving her complicity.'

'I hadn't; I have now. The cheque, if you remember, was presented by a woman.'

'Not Miss Colvend?'

'No; her maid. She had a situation ready for the girl to drop into. The very next day she went out to India as attendant upon a lady who was going to join her husband. Miss Colvend sold a quantity of jewelry to make things square with Adela.'

'Adela will have to be found, then, I suppose; and when she is found, perhaps she may deny the whole story.'

'O no, she won't. She is back in London. At the Cape news met the lady that her husband was dead; so she took the first vessel home, and brought Adela with her. I met the girl quite by chance, and, from a word or two, I know she would be glad enough to get the matter off her conscience, if only she could be sure of not being thrown on the world.'

'How did the notes get to Dane's lodgings?'

'I do not know; but I fancy Miss Colvend herself slipped them into the letter-box.'

There ensued a pause—longer even than that which had pre-faced the gist of the conversation. Mr. Gayre, in his turn, rose and paced the room, while Mr. Fife watched him anxiously. No greater change could be imagined than that which had taken place in the manager's look and bearing. He was not anxious now concerning money, for he knew whatever course Mr. Gayre elected to pursue the slip of paper in his pocket-book represented money's worth. But he was playing for another stake as well. And if the banker decided to take no action in the matter, he would, he felt, rise from the game a loser after all.

He grew weary with following that tall erect figure, of hearing that leisurely measured tread, of trying to gain from the banker's inscrutable face some vague idea of what was passing through his mind, ere Mr. Gayre, pausing suddenly, said,

'I do not see my way at all.'

'No?'

'The whole story is such an improbable one.'

'It is true, though.'

'I am not impugning your word. Still, you yourself must admit the tale you have told me has not exactly the ring of true metal.'

'That depends on whether you wish to believe the gold sterling or not. If you don't, Mr. Gayre, I will give you back your paper and go straight to Miss Drummond. Supposing she should have gone to bed, I know she will get up to hear what I propose to say to her.'

'Why should I wish to disbelieve you?' asked Mr. Gayre,

looking Mr. Fife sternly and steadily in the eyes.

'Because,' replied the other, with a resumption of his former boldness—'because you are afraid to think Dane innocent. You are afraid of yourself; you want to fancy you would "do right, let come what may," as the French say. I daresay I can read French as well as you, Mr. Gayre; and you know you won't do right. Why should you? The girl will be a thousand times happier if she marries you than as Dane's wife. He is a rackety chap; he can make the money spin. I don't mean to say there is much vice about him; but, upon my conscience, he can go a pace. So far as I know, he was never in the habit of going to races; but he had something on every one—Derby, Oaks, Ascot, Goodwood, St. Leger, and plenty more. He, and that Hilderton fellow too, did frequent some very queer places—places I wouldn't be seen in. Of course you'll do as you please; but were I in your shoes, I wouldn't get a waster out of prison only to marry him to a young woman in whom I took an interest. In my opinion it would be sinful; but, without doubt, you know best.'

'Your feeling towards Mr. Dane seems something malignant,' observed the banker. 'Without meaning any impertinence, I really should be glad to know how he has injured you. Even according to your own showing, he paid no attentions to Miss Colvend, neither did he in any way encourage her fancy for him.'

'A true bill on both counts,' answered Mr. Fife. 'And I don't much mind answering your question. I suppose you wouldn't call me a handsome man, now, would you?'

'I am scarcely a judge. I feel

no doubt, however, there are many ladies in whose eyes you would find much favour.'

'That's chaffing.'

'I assure you nothing was further from my intention than chaff of any kind.'

'Well, at any rate, I am not handsome, and you know it. *She* said I was like Quilp, or the Black Dwarf, or that other ugly fellow in Victor Hugo's *Notre Dame*.'

'I think Miss Colvend was wrong in fact as well as in taste.'

'Thank you. I don't believe I am quite so bad as she made out. I pleased her well enough so long as she was making a tool of me; but, however, that's not the question now. You want to know why I dislike Oliver Dane. I'm short, and broad, and plain. I haven't a good feature in my face. I'm a common-looking fellow, according to Miss Dossie; and for once, most likely, she spoke the truth. He, on the contrary, is the right height for a man; not too tall—he is some inches shorter than you—yet tall enough. He has a straight nose—thank Heaven, that has been brought to the grindstone; he has dark-blue eyes; he has brown hair cropped close—it is cropped closer now; he has the "sweetest" moustache—curse him! he has hands white and soft as a lady's—a use he never expected has been found for them lately; he is ten years younger than I am; he can dance; he can sing; he can ride; he can row; he can shoot; he can do anything, in a word; yet he has not half my brains or any of my steadiness. He is a mere popinjay; but he was preferred before me. I have served Mr. Colvend faithfully since I entered his house; yet I was left out in the cold, while Dane was petted and pampered and done

well by. Miss Dossie would have blacked his shoes if she could have won a smile from him. Not a soul came into the office but I knew went out of it thinking, "What a delightful manner that young Dane has!" If there were any halfpence going, he got them; but the kicks were all given to me. It was hard measure, and you can't deny it.'

'As you put the matter, perhaps so; yet I do not suppose you would have been in much better plight had such a person as Oliver Dane never existed.'

'I am not so sure of that. If Mr. Colvend did not love, certainly, once upon a time, he valued me. In those days it was "Fife, I wish you could call there;" or "Fife, if you can spare time, just run along and see to this!" But, bless your soul, once Mr. Dane, with his soft hands and well-kept nails and hair parted down the middle (I hope the Portland barber has altered that parting) and white teeth, came into the house, times were changed for your obedient. And he wasn't the making of a business man; he hadn't it in him. I swear to you, Mr. Gayre, if I were a merchant and wanted a clerk, I wouldn't give him a hundred a year. It was only that plausible manner of his drew men to him, as aniseed will rats. I don't much like the smell of aniseed myself, and I never took to Mr. Dane's manner.'

Mr. Gayre smiled, with a cynical relish of this frank revelation of human weakness. He could afford to smile, thinking, as he did, to be above all human weakness.

'Give me three days,' he said, 'and I will tell you my decision.'

'Great Heavens!' exclaimed Mr. Fife, striking his clenched

fist on the table so vehemently that everything upon it trembled, 'do you mean to tell me you need three days, or one, or an hour, to decide what you intend to do now the game is in your own hands?'

'I cannot see that it is. In the first place, it may be difficult to convince Mr. Colvend of the truth of your statement.'

'Then try Mr. Surlees,' advised Mr. Fife, with an unpleasant grin.

'And in the next place,' went on the banker, as suavely as though this advice had not been tendered, 'it is possible I may not care to stir in the matter at all.'

'That is very likely. By——! that's what I thought from the first. You fancy you will yet be able to win the girl, if you only keep her and her lover apart long enough; but you're wrong. Time won't make her forget him. Faith, were I a woman,' he added maliciously, 'I don't know that I should forget his handsome face in a hurry myself! Make your bargain. You'll be doing the girl a real kindness, and you'll be doing Dane himself a good turn, by giving him his liberty. Don't you be afraid the young woman won't marry you. She'd marry me on the terms; and if she had a little more money, that is a view of the question I should certainly entertain.'

'Thank Heaven, she hasn't more money, then!' exclaimed Mr. Gayre almost involuntarily.

'So you may; you see it leaves the field open for you,' retorted Mr. Fife, wilfully misinterpreting the banker's remark.

'At the end of three days—say Wednesday night—you shall have my answer,' repeated Mr. Gayre, meanly taking refuge in simple assertion, and declining further contest with an adversary able to

hit out so straight from the shoulder and hit so mercilessly.

'I feel very much disposed to cut the knot by going to Miss Drummond to-night.'

'You would have taken that course at first if, for some reason best known to yourself, it had not seemed more desirable to deal with me.'

'There is considerable truth in that statement,' was the cool reply. 'Well, I will give you till Wednesday; only understand one thing, Mr. Gayre—I'm not going to take your money and hold my tongue. Either you tell all I have told you to Colvend & Co., or I shall do so.'

'Evidently you take me to be such another as yourself,' said the banker, more angry than he would have cared to confess, spite of the chivalrous resolution he had formed.

'I take you for a man,' answered Mr. Fife, lifting his shabby hat and putting it on defiantly; then, as he left the room, he turned to Mr. Gayre, who was thankfully ringing the bell, and said, with jeering insolence,

'If you don't ask me to the wedding, I hope you will send me a good slice of the cake.'

'Thank God!' ejaculated Mr. Gayre, drawing a long breath, as the door slammed behind his unwelcome visitor, and looking round the room, rid at last of Mr. Fife's presence.

Then he sat down, and, his head supported on both hands, remained for quite half an hour buried in profound thought. All at once he rose, and, like one in some violent hurry, went into the hall, took down his top-coat, put on his hat as determinedly as Mr. Fife had done, and was marching straight into the night, when his servant hurrying after him said,

'You are surely not going out,

Colonel; it is pouring in torrents!'

The 'Colonel' never answered, but, flinging wide the door, passed out upon the doorstep, where he was met by a fierce gust of wind and a perfect deluge of rain.

'Shall I run for a cab, sir? You will be wet through before you get twenty yards.'

Again Mr. Gayre did not answer. He looked up and down the street, then at the black vault above his head, and the pelting storm.

'It would be madness,' he muttered. 'I could not ask to see her, soaked to the skin. I must defer the matter till to-morrow;' and, reëntering the house, he passed into the library, which he paced till the night was far spent.

CHAPTER XXVI.

BEYOND HIS STRENGTH.

If the woman who deliberates is lost, the man who hesitates does not lag far behind her on the downward path. When Mr. Gayre put on his coat he meant to go straight to Susan and tell her what he had heard. Casting temptation behind him, he resolved to do the right, 'let come what would.'

Money, time, influence, all— all should be spent in unlocking the door of Oliver Dane's prison. He would not palter with his own conscience—he would not tell specious lies to his own soul, and profess to be thinking of the girl's happiness whilst he was really seeking to compass his own selfish ends. He would not give with one hand and take with the other. In honour and honesty there was but one course to take. At the price he would have to

pay for her, even Susan Drummond must be considered too dear. That which was proposed to him seemed worse than any crime; it would be more cruel than seething the kid in its mother's milk to sacrifice that tender heart in the fire of its devoted affection.

If he was base enough to insist upon the condition suggested to him, how could he ever again look in those trustful brown eyes—red with weeping, dim with tears—touch the hand which had once lain close in that of her lover, kiss the lips he had seen quiver when she spoke of the ruin one day's work had wrought in his life? Such a sin might not be done—by him. Another—a different man, perhaps—But there he stopped in his mental sentence. The very strength of the temptation, the very determination he had to call up to resist that temptation, warned him he was in mortal peril. He was fighting for more than life—for right, for self-respect, for everything valuable to a human being save that which he felt to be a part of his soul, and which might never, never now be aught to him—never for ever. Till that moment he had only faintly grasped what Susan was to him. Daily, hourly, the vision of her married to another, after the first terrible moment of revelation, but dim, grew less and less distinct, till it seemed a mere shadowy memory of some troubled dream. Even supposing his endeavours to obtain a commutation of Dane's sentence were crowned with success—and in the whole world nothing appeared less likely—how could any one with such a stain on his name, without character or money, or friends willing and able to assist him, marry and support a wife? If he were not

wholly worthless he would refuse to accept the gift Susan was sure to offer; he would go away, and leave her free—he would not suffer the girl to mate with him. But now—now—one hour, and the world itself seemed changed to Mr. Gayre; the blackness of despair closed around him as he thought of the glorious hope he could carry to that lonely girl sitting in a solitude worse than widowhood. For her the dawn, the sunrise, the glad sights and sounds of early day, the songs of happy birds, the light breeze of morning; for him the blackness and ever-deepening gloom of a long, cold, cheerless winter's night.

This was the point he had mentally reached when, rushing from temptation and fully prepared to put the affair beyond the power of retraction, he was driven back by the pelting rain, which swept down upon him in its wild fury and lashed his face, cutting him almost like the sting of a whip.

Then the whole trouble had to be gone over again. For hours, as his weary restless feet fell silently on the Turkey carpet, he went on telling the same story to himself, repeating the same arguments, wandering along the road he already seemed to have been travelling for years. At such a crisis thought is worse than useless; it becomes the mere drudgery of a horse going round and round in a mill, making, so far as its own benefit or satisfaction goes, no progress, returning every few minutes to the point it has but just left, and growing at length well-nigh giddy and stupid from the constantly recurring sight of objects which have grown familiar to the verge of distraction.

Mr. Gayre had arrived at this pass mentally before he went to

bed. Not a fresh thought or useful idea occurred to him. Everything Right could find to say was said during the first ten minutes after Mr. Fife's departure. On the other hand, while the pleadings of Wrong were unduly protracted, they were not one half so convincing; had an impartial judge chanced to be on the bench, Wrong would have been ordered out of court at once. Still, that side which a man wishes to espouse must always make itself heard; and accordingly temptation, though often driven back, again came stealing up, and laid its soft hand on the banker, and tried to lead him by almost imperceptible degrees from the path there is no mistaking into that which conducts to wilds and mazes we once should have recoiled in horror from the thought of being compelled to traverse. Nevertheless, during the watches of that lonely night, Mr. Gayre's purpose never really faltered. He did shrink from the wrong, most earnestly he desired to cleave to the right; but he felt that the impulse which had so nearly driven him to see Susan before he slept, and put the matter for ever beyond all power of recall, was past. He would not now be precipitate. Even for her own sake he would not offer a cup of happiness which might next moment be dashed to the ground. How was it competent for him to tell what of truth or of falsehood lay folded within Mr. Fife's extraordinary story? So many things had to be thought of; there was so much to consider. No; most certainly he should not speak to Susan yet; with a safe conscience he might for a brief span longer maintain that sweet fancy which he openly confessed to his own soul was a delusion—that marriage between Oliver Dane and

herself could only be regarded as impossible.

And then he wondered for the hundredth time whether he could be generous as well as just. Whether he could ever forget he had been her lover, and really enact the part of friend; help Dane, for example, along the rough road of life, visit at their house, listen to Susan while she talked about how everything her husband touched prospered. But the last part he felt was impossible.

'I might as well,' he considered bitterly, 'propose myself standing godfather to their first child, and presenting the best silver mug and fork and spoon, and coral and bells, money could buy. No; I *may* be able to rise to such a pitch of magnanimity as to give him a leg if he can't mount the good steed Fortune by himself, but all else is beyond me. Some day I *must* tell Susan how I loved her, and never see her again. She will then think of me with far deeper interest; her thoughts will often stray to me; whether he is near or far off, she will have one sad corner in the garden of existence *he* will never be asked to visit. She will wonder what the man who, with her for wife, might have climbed so high, but who, lacking her, did nothing, is making of existence; and if what Fife says is true, the time may even come when she might think— Good God! what a villain I am! Were I in my senses to-night, I know I would not, for the sake of holding her in my arms, have her for one moment, even in thought, false to the man she loves.' Having attained to which moral state of mind, Mr. Gayre at length repaired to bed.

Both interviews—the short talk with Mr. Fife and the much longer talk with his own soul—

had taken a great deal out of the gentleman some persons casually referred to as 'our slow friend at the Old Tortoise in Lombard Street;' for which reason it was no doubt that when at length exhausted nature sought some repose he slept soundly.

The next morning he did not revert to his idea of rushing off to Islington. Quite the contrary. Light and air and sunshine but confirmed his determination to proceed in the matter slowly and cautiously, and make very sure he stood safely on one step before ascending to another, and to be hampered in his actions by the fads and whims of no woman living.

'I should know no rest,' considered Mr. Gayre, 'if once she were aware how matters stood.'

Possibly he was right. Yet still, it would have been better had she been aware.

The weary day went by—such a day as the banker humbly trusts he may never spend again—and at length the hour came when he meant to ask Susan for that cup of tea of which he had not partaken in her company for seven long days.

'I am so thankful to see you.' This was her greeting. 'I felt so afraid you were ill. I should have written, but I did not like to be troublesome.'

And all the time her face wore a tender anxious smile, and her eyes, out of which the sunlight of happiness faded one summer's morning at Enfield Highway, looked with inquiring solicitude into his. And she did not withdraw the hand he held, but let it lie in his strong warm grasp as though he had a right to keep it, as though in the whole wide world there were no Oliver Dane for whose sake she deemed the love of all other men valueless.

She did not know; but he knew—knew that it was impossible he could give her up, with his own lips pronounce his death-warrant, and, while opening the gate of freedom for Oliver Dane, kill every goodly hope, the tendrils of which had grown around his heart and entwined their roots with his very being.

'I have been well,' he answered; 'but a rather annoying affair has vexed me. However—' He broke off to say, 'I will not harass you with my worries. And you? You are ill, I fear. What is it—what is wrong?'

'Only the old story,' she answered sadly. 'Waiting is such heart-breaking work. Time goes on, and nothing seems to advance. It is more than six months now, Mr. Gayre. He went to Portland last week.'

The banker had forgotten this fact. As she spoke, however, he remembered; and it was with a sharp twinge of conscience he saw the girl's eyes were full of unshed tears; that the trouble—her lover's trouble—was indeed sapping away her great courage.

'It has been so difficult to get the signatures,' he remarked, more because he could think of no other words to speak than for any comfort or novelty contained in them. They—he and she—had gone over the same ground so often, the same things had been repeated so constantly, that they were both weary of the subject, which to him had been one long course of annoyance and humiliation, while to her it represented but hope deferred and disappointment.

Now the signatures were procured, what was to be done with them? To Mr. Gayre it had always seemed a mere waste of time this stringing of influential names together; while Susan, tossed

about by the advice of friends—counselled to do this by one, to take some quite different course by another, and ‘get out of the whole affair’ by a third—was growing utterly hopeless and discouraged.

The week too spent without seeing or hearing from Mr. Gayre had tried and spent her even more sorely than that gentleman intended it should.

As she poured out his tea he noticed how thin and transparent her hands looked, how hollow her cheeks were getting, how fragile her figure had become. With one sentence he could have caused her face to flush with hope, and given movement to those listless hands; but that one sentence he did not mean to speak—not, at all events, while it was capable of giving her unalloyed happiness.

‘Mr. Hilderton says,’ began Susan, after a pause, ‘that it is a case we should get ventilated by the press. Do you know any one connected with the press, Mr. Gayre?’

Mr. Gayre, thus appealed to, thought for a moment, and then could not call to recollection that he did.

‘It seems to me,’ he went on, ‘that the time is past for that. A chance might have existed while the severity of the sentence was fresh in the public mind; but now—’

‘Lal thinks there may be a chance even now.’

‘There may,’ said Mr. Gayre, but his tone was not hopeful.

‘Ah me!’ murmured Susan softly; and then for a moment she covered her face and kept silence.

‘Does not Mr. Hilderton know any newspaper men?’ asked Mr. Gayre, merely for the sake of saying something.

‘No one possessed of any in-

fluence,’ answered the girl; and then she looked at him with all her heart in her eyes. What her look meant was, ‘Cannot you get to know some person of influence able and willing to bring Oliver’s wrongs before the public, or Parliament, or the Queen, or anybody competent to set him free?’

How he did it, with Mr. Fife’s story fresh in his mind, Mr. Gayre never afterwards could imagine; but he looked straight back at the girl and shook his head.

‘O!’ she cried, ‘do not think me wearisome, but is there *nothing* to be done? Must I sit here with my hands folded, whilst he is dragging out such a life as that? You do not know him—really, I mean. If you did, you would understand what I feel. He never could bear restraint of any sort. It was only for me—for my sake—he came to London at all. He hated London, and business, and—and—’ Her voice shook so much that she could not finish her sentence.

‘There is the memorial, remember,’ suggested Mr. Gayre, feeling himself the worst of criminals.

‘But Lal says he is sure that won’t produce the slightest effect.’

‘It is a pity,’ observed the banker irritably, ‘you and he did not arrive at that conclusion a little earlier. If you remember, from the first I felt doubts concerning the expediency of moving heaven and earth to obtain signatures from people who knew practically nothing of the case.’

She sat with bowed head, her hands clasped tightly together, the while slow hot tears dropped heavily from her downcast eyes.

‘I did—not—mean—to vex you,’ she said at last, with a mighty effort; ‘but the delay, the hopelessness of the whole thing, is killing me. I can’t sleep, I can’t eat, food chokes me; the

horror of night, the thought of him lying all in the dark, eating his heart out, with those endless years stretching away in the distance, seem more than I can bear. And my feeling is not selfish—God knows it is not! If I could purchase freedom for him to-morrow, I would die—cheerfully, thankfully—if I only could think of him able to go where he liked and do what he liked, even though I never were to see him again, I could be content. I am a great trouble to you, I know, Mr. Gayre. You must be sick and weary of us both; but if you could only think of any plan, or any person, likely to help him in this awful strait, I would do anything you told me. I would follow your advice implicitly. I would listen to no one else—Lal or anybody. Won't you think, Mr. Gayre? Forgive me for troubling you so much; but it is just like saving a man from drowning, and you would do that, I know, at the risk of losing your own life. O, you will think; I see you will! How can I ever thank you?"

He could have told her, but he did not. Once more he was fighting that demon of temptation, and silently swearing he would not let his better self be conquered; all the landmarks of his higher nature he removed, because of a love he had always instinctively felt was not for the good of his soul.

How should she know? Heaven grant, he thought, she might never know the forces of evil beleaguering the citadel of his humanity at that moment! They came in serried ranks, rushing onwards with almost resistless power; and at last he understood fully what the temptation a man has to war against means, the awful battle he has to wage when once he lets himself be drawn

into such a conflict. At that juncture he intended to do right. Self-abnegation seemed grand to him. Again a sweeping sea of chivalric feeling brought a great opportunity to his feet; but while he was stretching down his feeble hands to seize it, the waves ebbed, and bore the chance back into that ocean where so many things, once fair and beautiful and of good repute, lie engulfed.

'Yes, I will think,' was all he could say, in a tone which conveyed far, far more than he intended.

In a second she had risen from her chair, and taken a step towards him. He never knew what purpose was in her mind, for she stopped suddenly, while a painful colour dyed her cheeks and forehead, and even her throat.

'I was forgetting something I wanted to say,' she remarked, after an embarrassed pause. 'It is probable I shall be leaving here soon.'

'Why?' Mr. Gayre was so astonished he could only utter that one word.

'I have been told I ought not—that is to say, I have been advised—I should not live all alone here, as I am doing. Perhaps you, too, think I have done wrong; but I had no intention. I never thought of that side of the question.'

'It was one of your own sex, I presume, who asked you to consider it,' hazarded Mr. Gayre, to whom, even at so supreme a moment, the idea of Susan and conventionality being associated suggested a conjecture so absurd he could scarcely keep from smiling.

'Yes; though I do not exactly know how you came to that conclusion,' and once again the girl coloured. 'There was a time,' she went on earnestly, 'I should

not have cared. I should have said, "Let people think what they like;" but I could not say that now. I have never before been quite by myself. I have always had some other person's wishes to consult, and judgment to lean on; but now my whole life is altered—

'And?' inquired Mr. Gayre.

'And I suppose I must make a change of some sort. If Oliver were in London—that is, where he was able to speak to me—it would not matter. He could, in that case, take care of me, and himself too. Now I have got him to think of—him as well as myself.'

'That is very true,' said Mr. Gayre, with a ring of bitterness she did not detect.

'So I have come to the conclusion,' Susan continued more readily, 'that I will take a little cottage somewhere near London. I don't care if it be no better than a labourer's. My old nurse would come up and live with me. Indeed, I have written to ask her to do so.'

'O! you have written, have you?'

This time it was Susan's turn to look astonished.

'Yes. I would have consulted you, only I could not tell when I might see you next.'

'I fancy it would have been impossible for any one to give better advice than that you have already asked and followed.'

'You really think so? I am very thankful. For other reasons, too, I want to leave here. I could live cheaper—in—in the labourer's cottage, and I most anxiously desire to save every penny I can. If, some morning, when Oliver comes back, I had not enough to enable him to make a fresh start I should never forgive myself; but what a far, far cry it is to Loch Awe! Will he ever come

back to me? Shall I ever see him on this earth again?'

Within a somewhat wide margin, Mr. Gayre could have answered this question had he liked; but he did not like, and so contented himself with uttering a certain number of regulation forms of comfort, which sounded so cold and unreal, Susan shrank from the consolation they offered.

'He does not believe in Oliver's innocence,' she considered after Mr. Gayre's departure. 'How am I ever to persuade this the only man who could really help him, of how incapable my darling is of crime?' And because she saw no way of compassing this, she cried herself into a troubled slumber, unwitting the banker felt as certain of Mr. Dane's being guiltless as he did of his own existence, and that over her head there slept a person who could have told her the name of 'a conceited puppy's' enemy.

Meanwhile Mr. Gayre's loneliness had been enlivened by a visit from his straitlaced brother-in-law.

'Gad,' began that worthy, 'what a time it is since I have seen you! Why, you look as washed out as an old muslin gown! What! is the matter? Bilious, eh?'

'I have got a confounded headache,' returned the banker, with that lack of ceremonious politeness only warranted by relationship.

'Bad—very bad,' returned Sir Geoffrey, with a sympathetic shake, as one who had exhausted the whole run of human ailments, and found nothing so hard to bear as a headache. "'All work and no play," you remember, "makes Jack"—far worse than a dull boy; a sick one. Now, look here, my friend, you know I am not a man to recommend stimulants when they can be avoided. I wish to heaven my constitution

did not require them! If you think the matter over quietly, Gayre, it really is an awful thing to have a constitution that eternally wants "picking up." Mine does, worse luck; if it didn't, I should indeed be thankful. But, however, what I want to say is this; for a headache like yours, you know, there is nothing so good as brandy-and-soda. I think I have mentioned the fact before, but I may as well give you the recipe again. I wouldn't take much—say a glass of brandy and a split of soda, your man might finish the soda; it would not be wasted—pity to waste anything. Try my prescription, Gayre; 'pon my soul you'll find yourself a new man after it.'

'Thank you greatly for *all* your suggestions, but I do not mean to take anything, except some sleep.'

'Balmy Nature's, etcetera,' said the Baronet. 'Well, I'll not prevent your swallowing that medicine, so I'll be off. O, I forgot what I came to say: Peggy's back.'

'When were father and daughter reunited?'

'I wouldn't sneer, Gayre, were I you; I wouldn't, upon my soul: it doesn't suit you, and it's not the thing to make a fellow exactly loved and respected. But, to answer your question, Peg and I were rejoined in filial bonds

—no, that's not it; how the deuce does the thing go! However, the dear girl returned to the paternal roof (for paternal read Moreby, thanks to the Jews) a week ago, looking lovelier than ever. We must marry her, Gayre; we really must, you know.'

'Marry her if you like, she's not my daughter.'

'For which little circumstance you may be very thankful, if you knew all, I can tell you.'

'I don't want you to tell me. I want to go to bed.'

'I'll not hinder you. She went over to see Susan yesterday.'

'Did she really! How *very* good of her!'

'Wasn't it? And she found the poor little woman altogether out of sorts. I am afraid she made a great mistake going and engaging herself to a wild sort of chap like Dane. Something quiet and sensible and domestic I should have thought much more the figure; but there, you never can tell anything about what suits girls. When I think of your poor sister—tut, what am I talking about! Just tell your man, Gayre, to fetch you one bottle of soda and a thimbleful of brandy. Acts like a charm. I know it does with me. No! then I won't keep you up! Good-night — *good-night!* And the Baronet was gone.

(To be continued.)

THE THREE FOUNTAINS OF HOENDERLO.

Told by a Dutchwoman.

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'A FRENCH HEIRESS,' 'VALENTINA,' ETC.

You want me to tell you a story ! I never was asked such a thing in my life before, and I do not know what can have put it into your head ; for everybody knows that we Holland people have no imagination, like the Germans. I do not mean that we are stupid, but we are not fond of inventing, and we like better to tell and hear of things that really happen. If a true story will do, I may be able to tell you one.

Dirck Freys, my husband, says that the first thing one wants for a story is a hero. Well, that is no difficulty ; for we at Hoenderlo have our hero already. He does not live among us, it is true, but he is not very far off ; and we owe to him everything that makes our lives good and pleasant. It is nearly forty years since he first visited us. I was a young woman then, and I am an old one now ; but I shall never forget him. I must explain to you the sort of country we live in, and how it all happened.

You are most likely accustomed to think of Holland as nothing but canals, dykes, flat meadows, smart houses, and gardens full of tulips. But there is a country not far from Arnheim, between the Rhine and the Yssel, which is quite unlike the rest of Holland. It is called the Veluwe, or 'poor country,' and most truly does it deserve its name. I thought my heart would have broken, soon after our marriage, when Dirck made up his mind to go and join

his cousin Steen, who had settled himself on a farm in the middle of that wilderness. They had always been like brothers, though Steen was a wild adventurous fellow, and my Dirck the best and steadiest lad in the world. Our parents had lost money in trade ; we were badly off ; and Steen wrote that land could be had in in the Veluwe for nothing. It only needed hard work to prosper, as he was doing. He offered Dirck a house, and a share in his farm, if he would come and work with him. We had no children then, only our little household goods to pack up, and the large Bible that Dirck's father had given us. I never knew the value of it till I found myself at Hoenderlo. Well, we got there at last ; and I can never forget the weight at my heart, and the tears that ran down my face, when, after our journey across the desert, we stopped at Steen's farm, and got down from the cart there.

Hoenderlo in those days was a little group of huts, chiefly built of mud and turf and boughs of trees. It stood, as it stands still, in the middle of an immense heath, more truly to be called a desert ; a great sand plain, stretching away on all sides to the horizon, and only broken by knolls on which heather grew. Just round Hoenderlo itself the ground is not quite sandy, or else you would rightly think that nobody could live there. There are remains of

oak forests, which were cut down years ago; but even the low stunted copses that remain on that dried-up land are a comfort to one's eyes. I wondered how any people ever found their way at all across such a wilderness, or made a colony there. Steen explained to me that it was formerly supposed to belong to nobody, but that, about a hundred years ago, a nobleman discovered that it was his property, and built a cottage there, with some idea of cultivating the land. Different people tried to live there, but nobody could endure it long, till one man came who was determined to make it his home; and gradually a few others joined him, and the place became by degrees a little village. When we got there, one man had just found some clay in the neighbourhood, and was trying to make bricks. At first, however, we had to live in a mud hut, like our neighbours. Steen's cottage, piled up of rough stones, was the only good one in the place. I was very miserable, for I had been brought up in a clean house, with a painted front, and a garden full of flowers. My father and mother could never bear to see a spot on anything. Dirck's people had not quite so much of the true Dutch spirit; but yet I think he often regretted the day when we had come into the Veluwe. I was obliged to try and cheer up, for his sake; but our troubles were very many. We had a wild rough set of neighbours, many of them poachers and bad characters; even our cousin Steen was scarcely respectable. There was no church, no clergyman, no school, no money to provide any of them. If you will believe me, there was not even a well of water in the place. We depended on the clouds for water; if there was no rain for some

time, we had to go several miles to the next village to fetch a bucketful. But my Dirck said to me, 'Cheer up, Bette! We need not stay here for ever. While we are here let us make the best of it, and do as well as we can.'

After that I could not be so selfish as to sulk and grumble any more. Dirck and Steen went on working together. They grew wheat and rye and vegetables, they fed a few cattle, and by all this they maintained themselves very well. On Sundays, when the day was fine, Dirck and I, and two or three others, used to walk several miles across the heath to the nearest church. But still, it was like living in a heathen country, instead of in the middle of Christian Europe. After a time, my little children came one after the other, and I was so busy with them that I had no time for low spirits. Things brightened a little round us. The brickmaker was able to supply bricks to build some houses; you may be sure that we were soon established in one of them. Then we laid out a garden, and had flowers growing in square beds with box edgings; the place became by degrees more like home.

But all this time you are wondering who my hero is. Not my good Dirck, though he deserves it: he would not like me to say too much about him. One summer afternoon I was sitting with my knitting at the house door. Jan and Marie and little Dirck were all round me on their three little stools, saying their letters, for I wished to teach them as much as I knew myself. Marie was always a lively child, and I had much trouble in making her sober and steady at her lessons. Her head went turning all ways, looking after the birds and butterflies that flitted across the garden.

But that afternoon something that came up the village street made her round eyes open very wide. Jan and Dirck, good boys as they were, could not help looking round too.

'There's a man!' said Marie.

'There's two men!' cried Dirck.

'Be quiet, children,' said I.

'They are gentlemen. You must not make a noise. Now then—A, B, C.'

But I could not help looking myself, and feeling curious, for it was such a wonderful thing to see strangers at Hoenderlo; and clergymen, too, as they seemed to be by their dress. They looked hot and tired, as if they had walked a long way, and had been well dusted by the sand of our wilderness. My lessons came to an end suddenly, for one of them, after saying a few words to his companion, turned in at our garden gate. I got up quickly enough, made the children take their stools and carry them away, and went forward to meet him. He was a sturdy, broad-shouldered, square-looking man, a thorough Dutchman, I suppose you would say. But though one could not call him handsome, I never saw a better face—good, trustworthy, full of strong straightforward kindness. People have told me since that he could be very stern. All I know is that he never spoke to me without a smile. I brought out a chair for him into the shade, and fetched him some milk. The children stood looking on: he called them to him, and asked us all our names. Then I suppose he saw in my face that I was wondering who he could be.

'You never saw me before, my good woman,' said he.

'No, sir.'

'I am Pastor Heldring of Hemmen, in the Betuwe. Not such a very distant neighbour, you see.

My friend and I have walked twenty miles to-day to visit your village.'

'I have heard of you, sir,' I said; 'but I cannot guess how you came to hear of such a place as Hoenderlo. It is seldom enough that any one visits us here.'

I remembered that Dirck and Steen had been once to Hemmen to buy some cattle. Though only twenty miles off, it lies on the other side of the Rhine, in a district rightly called, in comparison with our Veluwe, the Betuwe, or 'better country.' Dirck thought he had never seen such a beautiful place in his life; he was never tired of talking about the flowery orchards and meadows, the splendid avenues of trees, the Baron's castle and park, the pretty houses with their painted fronts, the church, the herds of fine cattle, the vegetable gardens. The people there told him long stories about their good pastor: how in a time of sad distress he had helped the people, had added money to their savings that they might buy calves, had helped them to plant potatoes, had set them to spin flax, had made himself their friend in a hundred ways. And his goodness had not been confined to his own parish, for in the great floods a few years before all the poor people of the district had looked to him for help. I remembered all this, and it was a great pleasure to see this good pastor sitting at my door. But I still wondered what had brought him to Hoenderlo. We wanted a friend, certainly; but we had no claim on him.

'Well,' he said, 'the other day some friends of mine were talking of this country of yours, and as I listened to them I wondered how any one could live here. We find it hard work enough sometimes, even in

our fertile Betuwa. I said so, and my friend answered me that, with the blessing of God, people could live and prosper even in a sandy desert. He said, "Look at Hoenderlo!" Well, I asked more about Hoenderlo, for I had never heard of it. It seemed to me strange that we should take an interest in Dutch colonies on the other side of the world, and know nothing of one twenty miles from our own doors. I determined to make acquaintance with it at once. So I started off this morning with a friend of mine who had the same wish, and we have walked here across the heath. A tiring walk it has been, indeed. Your sandy soil does not make good roads, my friend.

'No, sir,' said I; 'and the wind this morning must have blown the sand in your faces.'

'So it did, in clouds,' said Pastor Heldring. 'We had a very bad time of it till we reached the top of the last hill, and saw your village before us, like an island in the sea of desert. And now tell me your history: how do you and your neighbours maintain yourselves here? It must be a hard struggle.'

A few years before, I think I should have answered him with tears and grumblings, but, happily, those days were over. I had plenty of pleasant things to tell him, for certainly Dirck had done wonders with the farm. Our home was comfortable, our children were healthy. I told him we had a great deal to be thankful for.

Still, as we talked about the place, its drawbacks came out plainly enough. He had not been even so long in the village without discovering that there was no church and no school. But he was really startled at finding that we had not even a well of water.

He sat silent for a few minutes, deep in thought.

'That must be a terrible business, the want of water,' he said. 'Suppose you were told that you could have whichever you chose—a school or a well—what would your choice be?'

'Well, sir,' I said, 'it is weary work, to be sure, plodding miles for water in a dry season like this. You may think it strange, perhaps, that I should say I would rather have a school, in spite of that. But if you had lived here as I have, and knew our people, and had seen how the young ones grow up with no learning and no religion, fit for nothing but mischief, you would understand it. Look at those three, sir. I teach them what I can; but they will soon be beyond my teaching, and then what is to become of them?'

Pastor Heldring seemed struck by what I said. A few minutes after, Dirck came in with the other gentleman, whom he had met in the village, and they all went out together to look at the farm. Then they came back to our house, and we had a long talk. The dear pastor has often visited us since then; but that is the day I most love to remember, when he sat so quietly under the shade of our eaves, asking questions; and little Marie gathered a bunch of flowers out of her own head, and came and laid them on his knee. As the beautiful evening was coming on, we stood at the end of the village with a few neighbours, and watched our two guests setting off on their way home. And we heard the first words that Pastor Heldring said to his friend as they walked away: 'This barren desert needs three fountains.'

At the time we hardly understood what he meant, or what we had to hope for; but that was

because we knew so little of Pastor Heldring. Anything that he took up was sure to be carried through. He went about to all the neighbouring towns, and told the rich people of our wants; and in the autumn of that same year he came and told us that he had collected money enough to dig a well for us. He thought it best to begin with this, as it would cost the least of the three. Before long we had our well, deep and large, a true blessing to the village, for which we thanked him in our hearts every time we drew water from it. Such good water it was, too, fresh and clear as crystal. Not long after it was opened my fourth child was born, and we called him Otto Gerhard, after our good friend.

Then Pastor Heldring set to work on the school; and this was a much more difficult matter. He went to the Hague, to Amsterdam, to Rotterdam; but I suppose people did not care much to give to an out-of-the-way place they had never heard of in their lives; and years passed before he could collect enough money. Many of our neighbours thought he would get tired of it and give us up, but Dirk and I knew better than that; we trusted him and waited patiently. When he visited us at Hoenderlo, he would collect all the village people round him, young and old, and talk to them for hours. Even the worst and wildest felt that he was their friend. One of the men who came most under his influence was our cousin Steen, and that made us very happy; for Steen, with all his unsteady ways, had always been a good-hearted generous fellow.

Well, I must not make my story too long, or you will be tired of listening. Time went on: the money for the school was col-

lected at last, and then the question was, who would be schoolmaster? It was not every man who would care to settle himself in a place like Hoenderlo. But we were helped in that too; and Pastor Heldring found his man. There was a schoolmaster in Guelderland named Gangel, who had been ordered by the inspector to give up Bible-reading and prayers in his school because all the people in the parish could not agree about religion. Some were Roman Catholics, some were Protestants, and they did nothing but quarrel. The master could not obey, for he thought that religion was just the thing children could not do without, and in consequence he was obliged to give up his school, and try to find work elsewhere to support his wife and children. He happened to see Pastor Heldring's advertisement in the paper about a schoolmaster being wanted for Hoenderlo; and when he and the pastor met they liked each other so much that everything was soon settled. It was a white day for Hoenderlo when the school was opened. I took my four children there myself, for though Jan was a big boy, his father and I were determined that he should have all the learning he could. It would have been too bad to keep him back from drinking at the second fountain that had sprung up in our barren desert home.

I used to go and sit at the school-door sometimes, and listen to the lessons going on inside; and then perhaps I would go in and help the schoolmaster's wife with the girls' sewing, for she and I were always great friends. She did not find our young people stupid, or unwilling to learn; and Pastor Heldring himself said that they were growing up to be good servants and housekeepers.

After the school was opened our population went on increasing. People found Hoenderlo a cheap place to live in, which it certainly was, and not so barbarous and out of the world after all.

Some rich men, who had heard of us through Pastor Heldring, came forward and offered money towards building a church. We were ready enough to help ourselves, as far as our means would allow; and a grant from Government made it all quite easy. So sprang the last of our three fountains: and nowadays, when I look at the school and church and parsonage, when I listen to our own good clergyman, or draw water from the village well, I can hardly believe that there was a time when we had none of these; and in my heart I bless Pastor Heldring, and Him by whom he was guided, 'who maketh the parched ground to become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water.'

You see that we at Hoenderlo have plenty to tell you about Pastor Heldring. If you want to hear more about him you must go to Hemmen, his own pleasant village near the Rhine. There he has established an asylum for discharged female prisoners, and has founded a house for neglected vagabond children. I am told that in North Holland, near the Helder, a great piece of land, about 12,000 acres, was rescued thirty years ago from the sea. A colony of houses with a church in the midst of them was built upon it, and Pastor Heldring sent the first families to live there, and has taken the greatest interest in them ever since. The colony is called the Anna Polowna Polder, and prospers wonderfully. The people follow all sorts of trades—farm, cultivate flax and

madder. Their number, and the value of their land, increases every year. It is through our pastor also that missionaries have been sent to the Dutch colonies in Africa and the East Indies, to work both among our own people and the heathen.

I have been told that when Pastor Heldring was a young man at the University of Utrecht he was very much troubled in his mind, and doubted whether there was any truth at all in religion. He thought so much and worked so hard that at last his health gave way, and he was obliged to leave the university. He went to live at a farm at Pfalzdorf, near Cleves, belonging to a relation of his, and there he took to working in the fields and garden, following the advice of his good doctor, who said to him, 'Work in the fields, and think of the love of God.' I suppose this was the best prescription the doctor could have given; for out in the open air, among flowers and birds and country people, his mind, which had lost itself in the fog of books, became clear; he learned to care for his fellow-creatures and the world around him, and to see that the study of them was better than philosophy. In the fields faith and love came to him, and when he was ordained, and came to live at Hemmen, he was ready both to teach his people and to feel for them. As I tell you, there are many places where his name is loved and honoured; but I will venture to say that not at Hemmen, not at the Polder, not in the distant countries to which he has sent light and blessing, neither at home nor abroad, is it so dearly loved and so highly honoured as at Hoenderlo, our little village on the Veluwe heath, where his three springs flow on for us and for our children.

ANECDOTE CORNER



Illustration by

MILTON AT HOME.

See "ANECDOTE CORNER."

ANECDOTE CORNER.

WITH CONTRIBUTIONS BY E. S. DIXON—SURGEON-GENERAL COWEN—
A. H. WALL—WILLMOTT DIXON—THE ANECDOTE HUNTER—THE
EDITOR—AND OTHERS.

Miltoniana.

(With a Portrait Group, by E. K. Johnson.)

MILTON AT HOME.

WALTER THORNBURY, in his notes to *Two Centuries of Song*, observes: 'The very name of Milton evokes at once the traditions of this "signor dell' altissimo canto." A blind, venerable, gray-haired man, we see him alone in the twilight in his low-roofed-dim London room, hearing the angels conversing beside the golden gates of paradise as he touches the keys of the organ and ponders over the great mysteries of the primeval world. It is pleasant, in the following sonnet to his friend Mr. Lawrence, to find him describing his own fireside on the evening of "a sullen day," a flask of canary standing on the table beside an ivory-fretted lute:

"Lawrence, of virtuous father virtuous
son,
Now that the fields are dank and ways
are mire,
Where shall we sometimes meet, and by
the fire
Help waste a sullen day, what may be
won
From the hard season gaining? Time
will run
On smoother, till Favonius reinspire
The frozen earth, and clothe in fresh
attire
The lily and rose, that neither sowed nor
spun.
What neat repast shall feast us, light
and choice,
Of Attic taste, with wine, whence we may
rise
To hear the lute well touched, or artful
voice
Warble immortal notes and Tuscan air?
He who of those delights can judge, and
spare
To interpose them oft, is not unwise."

The face of Milton, in the group

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which we give from the pencil of Mr. E. K. Johnson, conveys a very good idea of the face of the poet as rendered in Vertue's engraving of 1731, from the original picture, then in the possession of the Right Hon. Speaker Onslow.

A NOBLE EXEMPLAR.

There are a few characters which have stood the closest scrutiny and the severest tests, which have been tried in the furnace, and have proved pure; which have been weighed in the balance, and have not been found wanting; which have been declared sterling by the general consent of mankind, and which are visibly stamped with the image and superscription of the Most High. These great men we trust that we know how to prize, and of these was Milton. The sight of his books, the sound of his name, are refreshing to us. His thoughts resemble those celestial fruits which the Virgin Martyr of Massinger sent down from the gardens of paradise to the earth, distinguished from the productions of other soils not only by their superior bloom and sweetness, but by their miraculous efficacy to invigorate and to heal. They are powerful not only to delight, but to elevate and purify. Nor do we envy the man who can study either the life or the writings of the Great Poet and Patriot without aspiring to emulate, not indeed the sublime

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EVEN in the fiercest uproar of our stormy passions conscience, though in her softest whispers, gives to the supremacy of rectitude the voice of an undying testimony.—
DR. CHALMERS.

works with which his genius has enriched our literature, but the zeal with which he laboured for the public good, the fortitude with which he endured every private calamity, the lofty disdain with which he looked down on temptations and dangers, the deadly hatred which he bore to bigots and tyrants, and the faith which he so sternly kept with his country and with his fame.—*Lord Macaulay.*

MILTON AND HIS TIMES.

The following lines on Milton appeared in 1680. The writer, whose signature is F. C., is supposed to be Francis Cradock, a member of the Rota Club, to which Milton belonged :

'O thou, the wonder of the present age—
An age immersed in luxury and vice ;
A race of triflers, who can relish naught
But the gay issue of an idle brain—
How couldst thou hope to please this
tinsel race?
Though blind, yet with the penetrating
eye
Of intellectual light thou dost survey
The labyrinth perplexed of Heaven's
decrees,
And with a quill plucked from an angel's
wing,
Dipt in the fount that laves the eternal
throne,
Trace the dark paths of Providence
divine,
And justify the ways of God to man.'

It may be noted that the last line of the above was adopted by Pope in the commencement of his *Essay on Man*.

A CRUSTY CHAMPION.

Boswell, in his *Life of Johnson*, relates : ' Miss Hannah More expressed a wonder that the poet who had written *Paradise Lost* should write such poor sonnets. "Milton, madam," replied John-

son, "was a genius that could cut a Colossus from a rock, but could not carve heads upon cherry-stones."'

DRYDEN'S LINES.

The famous lines by Dryden were inscribed under Milton's portrait in the handsome folio edition of *Paradise Lost*, which was published by subscription in 1680 :

'Three poets, in three distant ages born,
Greece, Italy, and England did adorn.
The first in loftiness of thought surpassed ;
The next in majesty ; in both the last.
The force of Nature could not farther go :
To make the third she joined the former
two.'

On the wall of St. Mildred's Church, Bread Street, underneath a bust of the poet, these lines are engraved.

THE MAGIC OF MILTON'S VERSE.

We often hear of the magical influence of poetry. The expression in general means nothing ; but applied to the writings of Milton it is most appropriate. His poetry acts like an incantation. Its merit lies less in its obvious meaning than in its occult power. There would seem, at first sight, to be no more in his words than in other words. But they are words of enchantment. No sooner are they pronounced than the past is present, and the distant near. New forms of beauty start at once into existence, and all the burial-places of the memory give up their dead. Change the structure of the sentence, substitute one synonym for another, and the whole effect is destroyed. The spell loses its power, and he who should then hope to conjure with it would

THERE is a sense of hearing that the vulgar know not of. And the voices of the dead breathe soft and frequent to those who can unite the memory with the faith.—LORD LYTTON (*Zanoni*).

find himself as much mistaken as Cassim, in the Arabian tale, when he stood crying 'Open, wheat!' 'Open, barley!' to the door which obeyed no sound but 'Open,

Sesame!' The miserable failure of Dryden in his attempt to rewrite some parts of the *Paradise Lost* is a remarkable instance of this.—Lord Macaulay.

Turning the Tables on a Tourist.

It is not often that one is so fortunate as to get a story like this from the fountain-head. The following was told the writer by one of the royal tourists, when travelling in the Austrian Saltzgammegut in 1877, and actually happened in that year. A party of tourists, consisting of eighteen persons, alighted at the Semmering station. They immediately set out to ascend the Sonnwendstein. On the road they were joined by three students in Tyrolean costume. As they were all bound on the same excursion no ceremony was made, and they became fast friends. Arrived at the summit, after interchanging pleasant remarks as to the scenery, &c., one of the students proposed an exchange of cards. Unfortunately, the caravan of eighteen had no cards, so were compelled to fall back upon the formality of introducing by name.

One of the party then said, in all simplicity and frankness, 'I have the honour to present to you their Imperial Highnesses the Princes Otho and Ferdinand of Hapsburg, sons of his Imperial Highness the Archduke Charles Louis, the Countess de Hoyos, the Counts of Degenfeld, of Aichelburg, of Nostiz,' &c. This appeared to the students such a capital joke that they thought they would improve matters; so one of them, acting as the spokesman, said, 'Allow me to introduce myself as the King of Spain travelling *incognito*. This gentleman on my right is the Crown Prince of China, and our third friend is no less than a direct descendant of the famous Artaxerxes!' The feelings of the students may be imagined when, later on, they ascertained that they were the only pretenders.

Presence of Mind.

DEAN STANLEY, speaking at a *conversazione* of the National Temperance League on 'Presence of Mind,' related a number of anecdotes illustrating his theme. Sometimes, the Dean said, presence of mind was shown by silence, sometimes by action, and sometimes by action and word together. The better and higher their character was, the stronger and more efficacious, and the more likely they were to leave an abiding impression on

those who heard and saw them. Let every one try to get presence of mind; they may be assured that it was one of the qualities most brought about by sobriety, and most injured by intemperance. A vote of thanks was passed by acclamation to Dean Stanley, who replied, amid merriment, 'I am very much obliged to you. I shall show my *presence of mind* by silence!'

ALL that we plain folk understand by the name of HOME —its perfect trust and truth, its simple holiness, its exquisite happiness, being to the world what conscience is to the human mind.—LORD LYTTON (*The Caxtons*).

The 'Advocate' Print, or Petrus Van Tol.

(With a Portrait.)

AN extraordinary sensation (says the *Times*) was caused on May 10th, during the sale of Dr. Griffiths's collection of old prints at Messrs. Sotheby's rooms, by the appearance of the almost unique 'first state' of Rembrandt's portrait of Dr. Arnoldus Tholinx, otherwise called 'The Advocate Tolling,' or 'Petrus Van Tol.' This copy is one of four or five known impressions, of which three are in public museums, and it has a history which is well known to all Rembrandt collectors. The previous lot had sold for 33*l.*; but when the Tholinx came on, the auctioneer at once offered to begin the bidding at 500*l.* The challenge was accepted by Messrs. Colnaghi, and between them and M. Clément of Paris the contest was continued up to about 800*l.*; then the former competitors retired, and their place was taken by Mr. Nosedá, who fought the Frenchman step by step till 1100*l.* was reached, the excitement in the room being shown by repeated

cheers. At last Mr. Nosedá withdrew; and, to the gratification of all present, the battle was taken up by Mr. Addington, the veteran collector, who, amid applause, bid 1200*l.*, and so on up to 1500*l.* At this point even he was beaten, and the French dealer carried off the treasure at the price of 1510*l.*, which is 230*l.* more than has ever been paid for a print before. It is understood that M. Clément was buying for M. Dutuit, the celebrated Rouen amateur, and the author of the best existing book on old prints and etchings; who is, moreover, the owner of the print that had previously been the highest-priced in existence, the 'first state' of the 'Hundred Guilder Piece,' for which he paid 1180*l.* some years ago. It may be added that Dr. Griffiths's splendid impression of the 'second state' of that print sold on May 10th for 305*l.*, his 'Landscape with a Tower' (on India paper) for 308*l.*, and his 'Burgomaster Six' for 505*l.*, all extraordinary prices.

Wrong Division.

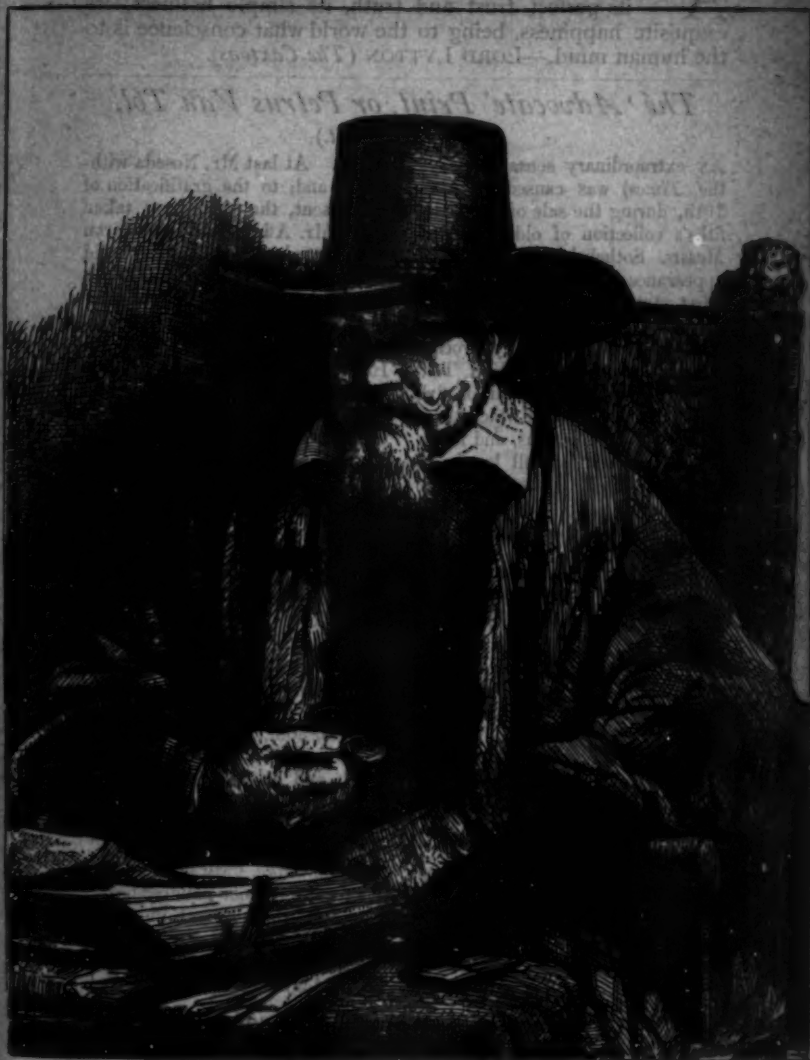
THE custom of repeating and dividing the words of a hymn, still commonly practised by certain chapel-goers and preachers, has given some odd results from time to time. Amongst others, to

the following: 'My poor pol- my poor pol- my poor polluted heart;' 'And in the pi- and in the pi- and in the pious He delights;' 'And take Thy pil- and take Thy pil- and take Thy pilgrim home.'

The Mayor of Liverpool.

MANY years ago, when the Duke of Gloucester was in command in Lancashire, the Mayor and Corporation of Liverpool invited him to a state dinner, in the course of which the Mayor, seeing that the

Duke only took one plate of the turtle soup, cried out, 'Do, pray, your Royal Highness, fill your royal stomach; we've plenty more in the kitchen!'



A FAMOUS "REMBRANDT."
See "ANSCOTE CORNER"—The "Advocate" Print.

THE lightsome countenance of a friend giveth such an inward decking to the house where it lodgeth, as proudest palaces have cause to envy the gilding.—SIR PHILIP SIDNEY.

Epigrams.

THE following neat epigram, by Sydney Smith, was written on the occasion of his returning home one day and finding little Jeffrey, the *Edinburgh Reviewer*, riding round the yard on a donkey, to the amusement of some children :

'Short, but not so fat as Bacchus,
Witty as Horatius Flaccus,
As great a Jacobin as Gracchus,
See little Jeffrey on a jackass.'

Sent with a couple of ducks to a patient :

'I've despatched, my dear madam, this scrap of a letter
To say that Miss — is very much better;
A regular doctor no longer she lacks,
So therefore I've sent her a couple of quacks.'

Canning, having heard that Brougham wished his enmity to Pitt to be written on his tomb, wrote the following :

'Brougham writes his epitaph, to wit,
"Here lies the enemy of Pitt."
If we're to take him *à la lettre*,
The sooner 'tis inscribed the better.'

A commercial traveller, having left a shirt at an inn, wrote to the

chambermaid to forward it to him. This produced the following :

'I hope, dear sir, you'll not feel hurt,
I'll frankly tell you all about it;
I've made a shift with your old shirt,
And you must make a shift without it.'

Here is an epigram by Lord Byron on the world :

'The world is a bundle of hay,
Mankind are the asses that pull;
Each tugs it a different way,
And the greatest of all is John Bull.'

On a clergyman complaining that he had lost his portmanteau :

'I've lost my portmanteau—
"I pity your grief."
All my sermons are in it—
"I pity the thief!"'

To a Mr. Wellwood who exaggerated :

'You double each story you tell;
You double each sight that you see;
Your name is W E double L
W double O D.'

Which men are preferable ?

'Whether tall men, or short men, are best,
Or bold men, or modest and shy men,
I can't say ; but this I can protest—
All the fair are in favour of Hy-men.'

Anecdote of Sydney Smith.

A YOUNG gentleman was in the habit of addressing the witty Canon by his Christian name, a privilege he only allowed to his most intimate friends. One day the said young gentleman observed, 'Sydney, I shall run down to Addington and see the Archbishop of Canterbury, who has often in-

vited me.' 'Ah!' said Smith, 'good! But let me give you a word of advice. Dr. Howley is an excellent man, but somewhat proud. Don't you call him "William," he might not like it.' And the young gentleman never afterwards forgot the 'Mr.' before Sydney.

A Happy Magistratic Dictum.

'I WAS drunk when I married her, your worship,' pleaded the defendant in extenuation of punishment. 'I daresay you were,'

replied the magistrate; 'most men are when they marry pretty women. Beauty, we know, is always intoxicating.'

PLATO said his master Socrates was like the apothecary's gallipots, that had on the outside apes, owls, and satyrs, but within precious drugs.—LORD BACON.

Anecdotes of the Kembles.

JOHN KEMBLE was dining at my uncle's one day, and after the ladies had reached the drawing-room, my aunt requested a young-lady visitor—a very distinguished amateur of that day—to sing. This she at once did, and was just concluding Handel's beautiful air 'Wise men flattering,' which she was rather celebrated for executing with polished grace, when the gentlemen 'joined the ladies,' as the phrase is. John Kemble, who, plain truth obliges me to say, had evidently taken far more wine than was at all good for him, came sidling up to the pianoforte, and with solemn politeness said, as well as his thick utterance would permit, 'You've a beaut-ti-ful voish; but 'scuse me for obsherving that you—you—don't know h-how to shing; but I'll—I'll—teash you myself' Concluding that such an amazing offer must be simply irresistible, he desired her to play the accompaniment of a then very popular and very fine song of (I think) Battis-hill's, 'Let Ambition fire thy Mind.' As the lady happened to know something of this song she at once began to play, when the illustrious John, in his new character of singing-master, to the intense astonishment of the now silent but amused company, after steadying himself against the piano, commenced with the utmost solemnity, in a husky cracked voice,

'Let amb-b-bition f-f-fire thy m-m-ind,
Thou w-w-ert b-b-orn o'er k-k-kingah to
re-re-reign'

but when he had arrived so far he suddenly stopped short, rubbed his forehead, and, amidst the applause of the guests, commenced an elabo-

rate apology, as if it was a great public calamity, that he could not just then recall the third line, but added, with lofty and condescending gallantry, 'You shee jush what I mean; that's proper w-way to shing; and that's w-w-way you ought shing.' I need hardly add that so important and striking a lesson was not lost upon the fair vocalist, who was remembered afterwards as the one and only 'pupil' to whom the great tragedian had ever deigned to give a singing-lesson.

It has often been observed that some of these very great tragedians can never forget the 'shop,' as regards tone and style, which possibly may arise from long habit, so that theatrical mannerisms and language would constantly be introduced into the commonest matters of every-day prosy life. In illustration of this my aunt used to relate the following anecdotes of Mrs. Siddons: One day, whilst seated in a well-known draper's in Bond Street, busily engaged with her purchases, my aunt—as they say in the old ballads—'suddenly became aware' of a voice of extraordinary tone and pathos. The speaker was a lady seated close behind, and with her back turned to my aunt. With the genuine intonation and slow utterance of the deepest tragedy, the customer demanded of the bewildered shopman, 'Will—this—gown—war-sh?' and on being answered in the affirmative, and that the colour was fast, rejoined, with still greater dramatic solemnity, 'The colour, then, fadeth not? Ah! 'tis well!' 'O, O,' thought

AS the sword of the best-tempered metal is most flexible, so the truly generous are most pliant and courteous in their behaviour to their inferiors.—T. FULLER.

my aunt, 'the queen of tragedy alive!' In a moment they were shaking hands and exchanging greetings, and in another discussing the respective merits of cottons and prints, of which Mrs. Siddons showed herself a keen judge, when she could lay aside—which was rare indeed—her dramatic affectation.

On another occasion my aunt was seated opposite to Mrs. Siddons at a dinner-party. Some salad was brought to her, which she declined; but the host loudly extolled its very special merits, and urged her just to 'try it.' So, after a little hesitation, the great tragedian turned round to the footman who stood behind her with the salad, and extending both her hands with a genuine theatrical air (*à la* Queen Katharine before Henry VIII.), and throwing her head back in the true tragic style, exclaimed in her deepest tones and most popular manner, 'I must—obey;—then—bring me—the b-o-w-l!' The company were, of course, deeply impressed.

G. B. G.

An affected actor, who set himself for great originality, especially

in the pronunciation of words, was in the habit of playing inferior parts to Kemble's leading characters, and terribly annoyed the great man by his affectation and foolish pomposity. At length Kemble's wrath broke out, and, one night in particular, he launched on the unfortunate fellow's head the bolt of discomfiture and ruin, quite to his amazement and surprise. Among the peculiarities of this actor in the pronunciation of words, he held that the proper name 'Cato' should not be pronounced as it was then and is still, but with the accent on the last syllable, 'Catò,' so as to rhyme with 'below.' On this particular night Kemble played Cato, and 'the original,' in one part of the play, had to come on and say,

'Caesar sends health to Cato!'

So he entered, and addressing the great Roman, spoke out the words, laying peculiar emphasis on the last—

'Caesar sends health to Catò.'

Kemble could not stand it any longer; he frowned, and, changing the words in the play, he thundered out at the bewildered courier,

'Would he had sent it by a better messenger!'

All Communications must be Authenticated.

A CORRESPONDENT to a certain Yankee newspaper was in the habit of sending the editor paragraphs of the enormous eggs a peculiarly large race of fowls used to produce. At length Mr. Editor

stopped the literary contributions thus: 'To X.Y.Z.—Please accompany future notices of "big eggs" with several ones of ordinary size, *not for publication*, but as a guarantee of good faith.'

Within an Ace of his Life.

'It's no use,' wrote the same editor, 'for Veritas to send us more notices of "Narrow Escapes"

until he can beat this: "Last night, as the express train was nearing Dashville, a stranger acci-

THE first ingredient in conversation is truth, the next good sense, the third good humour, and the fourth wit.—SIR W. TEMPLE.

dentally got on the rails; but, seeing the in-gine and cars coming, managed to fix himself bolt upright against a bank, and 'drew in' until he was as flat as a board.

The train shaved him so close that it cut the knobs of the bone studs off his shirt, but otherwise did him no damage."

Mind your Stops.

A BRITISH nobleman engaged a celebrated Scotch physician to attend his lady in her confinement. Being wanted suddenly, there was no time to send for him, and, consequently, a telegraphic message was forwarded: 'Don't come—too late!' The telegraph-clerk de-

livered the message without punctuation, making it read, 'Don't come too late.' The result was the doctor arrived in London; claimed, for his fee and expenses, two hundred pounds, and afterwards, by law proceedings, obtained that sum.

A Queer Story.

THE origin of the word 'queer' is due to Quin. He bet one hundred pounds with a nobleman, one evening, that, by the next morning at breakfast-time, there would be a word in most people's mouths that was never heard before. That night, when the theatre had closed, he got all the 'supers' and others whom he hired, furnished each with a good lump of chalk, and instructed one and all to go through principal streets of London

and chalk on the flags the word 'QUEER.' The next morning people were startled by seeing such an unusual sight. Some believed it was significant of danger—that a secret enemy was near, and this was his watchword; so the word went the rounds in a most amazing way. It might be said to be not 'in most people's mouths,' but 'in everybody's mouth.' Quin, of course, won the wager.

Taking a Gentle Hint.

HER lips were like the leaves, he said,
By autumn's crimson tinted;
Some people autumn leaves preserve
By pressing them, she hinted.
The meaning of the gentle hint
The lover did discern,
And so he clasped her round the neck,
And glued his lips to her'n.

American Paper.



THE QUIET, HOPING HEART.

AN ORIGINAL STUDY BY EDWARD TAYLOR.

He holds me that I shall not fall,
And so to Him I leave it all.

SAMUEL RODGERS, 1873.